

# CINEFANTASTIQUE

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## GIGER

THE "ALIEN" ARTIST WHO  
CHANGED THE LOOK OF SF

### WILLOW

"Opie Wan Kenobie" directs  
retread of STAR WARS

### WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT?

Spielberg's big-budget  
live-action/cartoon fantasy

### ROBOJOX

Stuart Gordon helms robot  
script by Joe Haldeman

PLUS: H. R. GIGER'S "THE MIRROR"  
Filming the nightmare world of Giger's "Necronomicon"





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Giger. The name itself sounds alien. Hans Rudi (H. R.) Giger is the Swiss surrealist whose design work for ALIEN copped him an Oscar at age 40 and changed the look of science fiction. This issue is devoted to Giger's artistic genius and the enormous influence his work has had on the look of horror, fantasy, and science fiction films.

Writers Jan Doense and Les Paul Robley visited Giger at his combination home/studio/gallery/workshop in Zurich to talk about his work in film, his art, and how his unique style has become common property in Hollywood. A sidebar article "Hollywood Rips-Off H. R. Giger" is a visual catalogue of some of the most blatant Giger imitations, many from some of the biggest names in movies and special effects.

In "Sliming Technology" Brooks Landon looks at how Giger's work has changed our perception of what is alien. Award-winning science fiction artist Vincent Di Fate writes about the influences on Giger's art in "Roots of Imagination," and puts the impact of Giger's work into artistic perspective. And Sheldon Teitelbaum presents a preview of THE MIRROR, a forthcoming film based on the imagery of Giger's famed *Necronomicon* which promises to be the most faithful film adaptation of the artist's nightmare vision to date.

An enduring mystery is the reason why Giger has not been approached to contribute to the filming of ALIENS and forthcoming sequels ALIEN III & IV. If that's something you'd like to see, we suggest you write 20th Century-Fox and let them know. Write Barry Diller, 20th Century-Fox, Box 900, Beverly Hills, CA 90213. Tell him you want to see the "real thing."

Frederick S. Clarke

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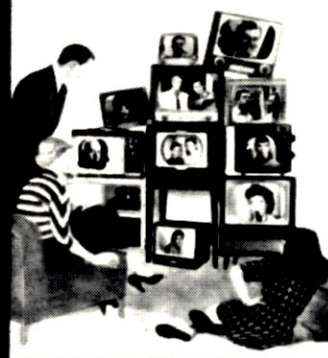


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# WHO FRAMED

## The scoop on the megabuck live-action cartoon

By Patrick Hobby

The famous Looney Tunes cartoon theme, "The Merry-Go-Round Broke Down," begins and a logo appears on screen similar to a Warner Bros cartoon title backed by concentric circles. "Maroon Cartoons presents Roger Rabbit in 'The Bunnysitter.'" Cut to Roger Rabbit having a finger wagged at him and being told he must look after Baby Herman, or else it's back to the animal testing laboratory. As the woman exits, Baby Herman escapes from his play pen and the three-minute featurette unfolds like a Tom and Jerry short in reverse as Baby Herman saves Roger Rabbit from all manner of accidental scrapes. As a refrigerator falls on Roger, he yells, and someone cries 'Cut.' The camera pulls back to reveal the cartoon set is really a soundstage—the direc-

tor called cut because Roger said the wrong line. Baby Herman walks off in a sulk, grabs a cigar and fondles a passing makeup girl. . . .

Thus the scene is set for the ambitious cartoon/live action film WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT?, a \$45 million Toontown Limited production for Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment to be released by Walt Disney Pictures on June 24th, 1988. Bob (MONA LISA) Hoskins stars in the film as a *noirish* '40s private detective investigating a murder involving the famous cartoon characters of Hollywood. The other live-action members of the cast include Christopher Lloyd, Joanna (BLADERUNNER) Cassidy and Stubby Kaye.

The Walt Disney Presentation in association with Silver Screen Partners III is directed

by Robert (BACK TO THE FUTURE) Zemeckis, who storyboarded the film's opening cartoon with animation supervisor Richard Williams. The realism of Williams' animation is enhanced by ILM special effects techniques whenever the cartoon characters appear in scenes with the live actors.

Those who have seen ILM's test footage say the cartoon characters look stunningly "dimensional." ILM consultant Ken Ralston reportedly chose to work on WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT? instead of George Lucas' *Lord of the Rings* revisited, WILLOW. Along with Scott Farrar and Clyde Bryan, Ralston is said to have achieved spectacular results.

"A scene was shot with an actor walking down an iron staircase talking to Roger," described a source on the production. "They walk through puddles, past glass windows, traffic lights, and a dustbin to end up sitting on a car hood. Roger is animated in the scene and ILM was supplied with three different colored Rog-

ers—a natural tone, a shadow, and a highlighter. ILM put it together, soft-edged the paint and controlled the exposure so you can see the rabbit's reflection and skin tone in all the different hues necessitated by the props. The result looks fantastic. People who know nothing about animation have said they thought Roger was an audio-animatronic effect. Only when he does obvious cartoon tricks, like contorting his body, is the game given away. The illusion is that perfect."

Written by Jeffrey Price and Peter Seaman, based on Gary Wolfe's book *Who Killed Roger Rabbit*, the project, described by one production source as "Mary Poppins for adults," was on Disney's production slate for years. The film, at one stage titled WHO SHOT ROGER RABBIT? and later renamed by Disney because of their corporate "family" image, was produced by Spielberg, Frank Marshall, and Kathleen Kennedy. The film was photographed by Dean Cundy, and showcases special effects by George Gibbs.

Starring alongside Roger Rabbit (Maroon Cartoon studios very own superstar), his girlfriend Jessica (a voluptu-

Model sheets like this one show how animators supervised by Richard Williams combined the famous cartoon characters of Hollywood with detective Eddie Valiant and old flame Dolores (left), played by actors Bob Hoskins and Joanna Cassidy. Roger Rabbit is shown second from right. The realism of the animation is being enhanced with special effects supplied by ILM.





# ROGER RABBIT?

fantasy from Steven Spielberg and Walt Disney.

ous red-headed bombshell), and Baby Herman (a cantankerous fifty year-old drunk in a three year-old's body), are a host of much loved cartoon characters from the Tex Avery, Chuck Jones and Disney stables. A source close to the production said that at the last count over 80 cameos were included along with special appearances by Betty Boop, Chip'n'Dale, Daffy and Donald Duck, Droopy, Dumbo, Elmer Fudd, Foghorn Leghorn, Goofy, Porky Pig, Tom and Jerry, Yosemite Sam, Popeye, Bluto and Bugs Bunny. Originally Mickey Mouse was to be featured in silhouette in the back of a limousine alongside another famous set of ears—Clark Gable's—during a funeral sequence. This was axed in favor of a throwaway gag near the end of the film where Mickey is glimpsed in a crowd scene.

"There is no real plot," said a source on the production. "WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT? is really an excuse to see everyone's favorite cartoon characters together on screen for the first time. Another novelty item is to show Hoskins having sex scenes with animated drawings in a Disney-

fied FRITZ THE CAT mode. Zemeckis is trying to be faithful to cartoon history. For example, when Felix the Cat is shown in one sequence, the gag is that he's in black and white and talks in speech bubbles."

Principal photography began December 1, 1986 in Los Angeles at RenMar studios for a three week period before moving to Cannon Elstree Studios in London on January 5, 1987 for a further ten week stint. Set in 1947, period locations in Los Angeles ranged from the Griffith Park Underpass, Hyperion Bridge, and Dodger Stadium. London locations included a disused Electrical Testing Station and a West London cinema set, dressed to resemble the old Grauman's Chinese Theatre.

Since Disney optioned the book years ago the script has gone through numerous changes, especially after Harrison Ford turned down the lead role of private investigator Eddie Valiant. "The script was changed vastly when Hoskins was cast," said a source on the production. "Instead of

Valiant being seedily attractive as originally envisaged, he was made more knockabout with an edge of pathos that seemed tailor made for Hoskins."

Hoskins, as detective Eddie Valiant, is hired by cartoon kingpin R. K. Maroon (Alan Tilvern) to keep tabs on Roger Rabbit's wife, Jessica. Valiant goes to the Ink and Paint club in Toontown to see Jessica sing. Betty Boop plays a cigarette girl while Tex Avery's Wolf sneaks around. The nightclub is owned by Valiant's girlfriend Dolores (Joanna Cassidy). Backstage Valiant sees Jessica embracing Marvin Acme, (Stubby Kaye), the owner of a warehouse that supplies joke props for use in the cartoon industry. When Acme is found dead Roger persuades Valiant to prove his innocence while he hides out in Toontown, the cartoon equivalent of Hollywood where all the animated stars live. There we see Gepetto's cottage from PINOCCHIO next to a Tex Avery inspired skyscraper and Bugs Bunny's rabbit hole.

Enter Judge Doom, (Christopher Lloyd), the real villain of the piece, who wants to level Toontown to build a freeway. He threatens Valiant to lay off the case and makes his point

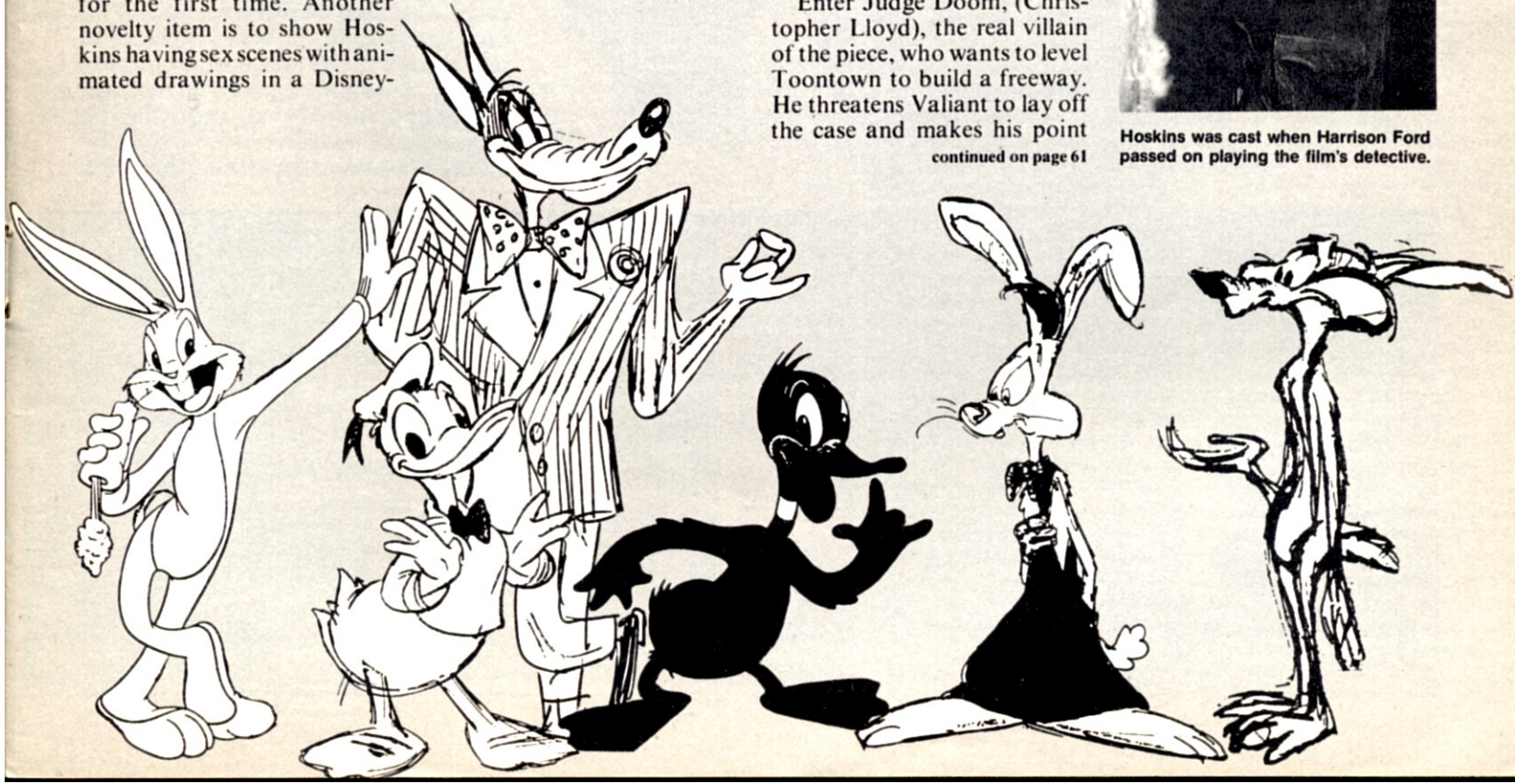
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Bob Hoskins plays a '40s detective investigating a murder in cartoonland.



Hoskins was cast when Harrison Ford passed on playing the film's detective.





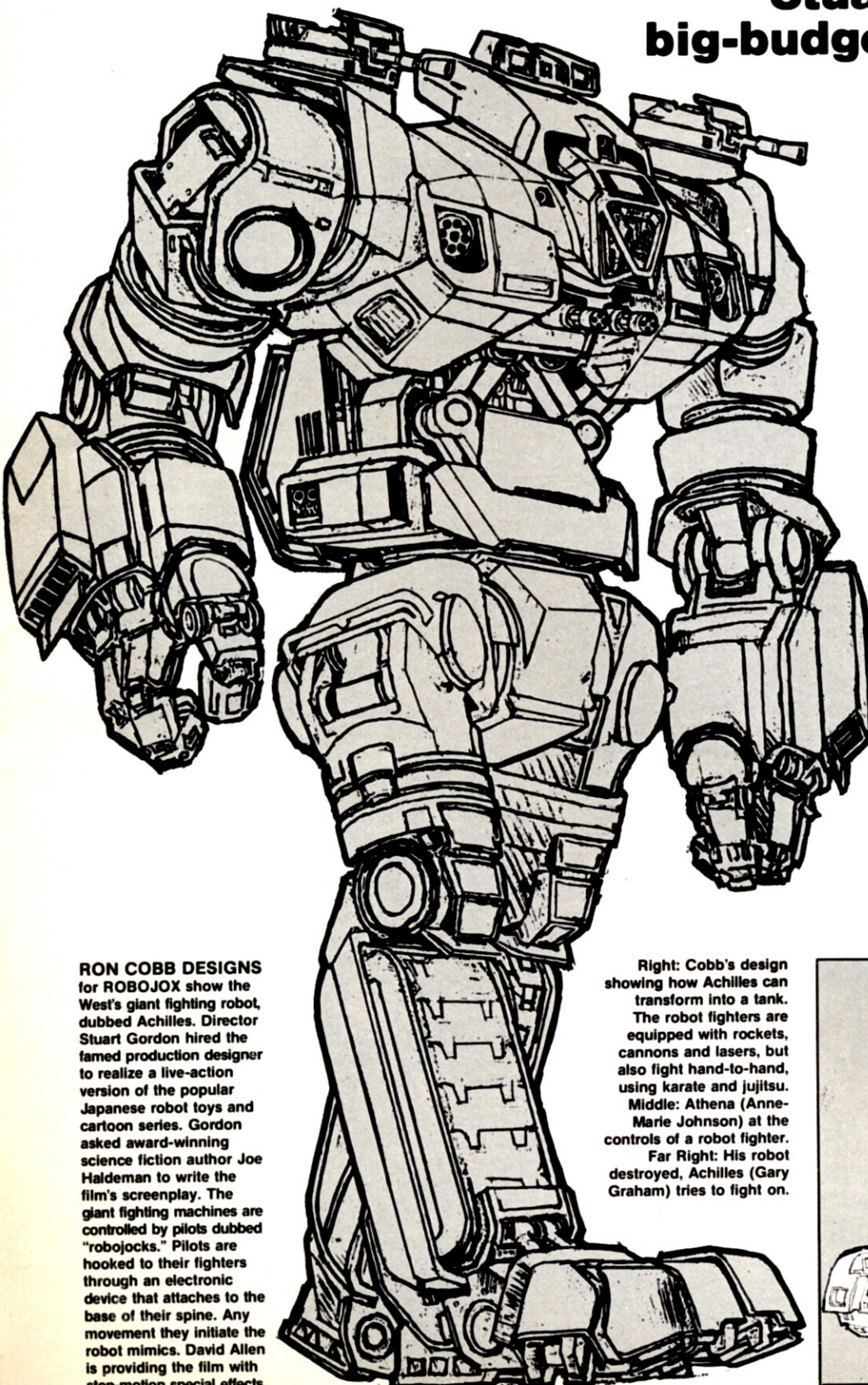
# ROBOJ

**Stuart Gordon directs big-budget science fiction.**

*By Giuseppe Salza & Dennis Fischer*

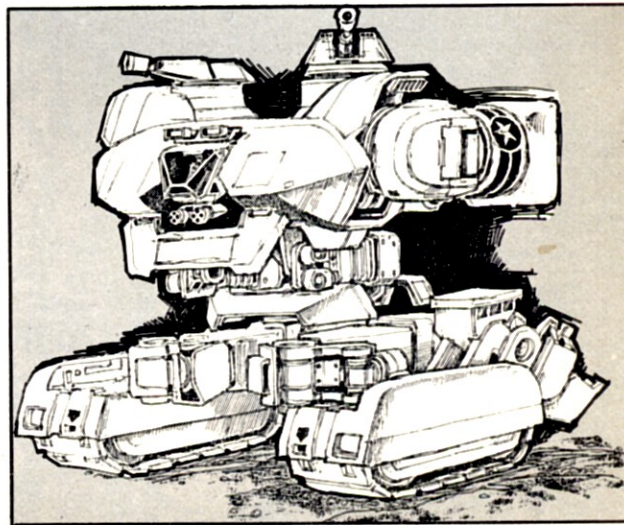
You can't wander into a shopping mall without seeing them. Robot toys are one of the biggest selling items for children everywhere in the world. Popularized in animated cartoon series from Japan, the giant fighting robots have been the subject of two animated features, *TRANSFORMERS* (a 1987 flop for DEG) and *ROBO-TECH* (as yet unreleased by Cannon). Now the genre is about to go live-action. At Empire's sound stages near Rome, Stuart Gordon (*DOLLS*, *FROM BEYOND*) has directed *ROBOJOX*, a science fiction post-apocalyptic tale of robot warfare. The \$9 million production, Empire's biggest ever, has seen its release date postponed from Christmas '87 to Easter—now set for this summer—when its complex post-production effects took more time than expected.

Despite his fame as the "guru of gore," for films like Empire's *THE RE-ANIMATOR*, Gordon decided to jump on the toy bandwagon so he could make a movie that his two small children would be allowed to see. "I first got the idea when I looked at the kids' toys and saw all these Japanese robots," he said. "I became a big fan of the cartoon stories myself. What I found most interesting were the toys' boxes, with illustrations showing gigantic robots being moved by crews of "small" men. The idea of making a live-action movie out of this concept seemed exciting, using the special



**RON COBB DESIGNS** for *ROBOJOX* show the West's giant fighting robot, dubbed Achilles. Director Stuart Gordon hired the famed production designer to realize a live-action version of the popular Japanese robot toys and cartoon series. Gordon asked award-winning science fiction author Joe Haldeman to write the film's screenplay. The giant fighting machines are controlled by pilots dubbed "robojocks." Pilots are hooked to their fighters through an electronic device that attaches to the base of their spine. Any movement they initiate the robot mimics. David Allen is providing the film with stop-motion special effects.

**Right:** Cobb's design showing how Achilles can transform into a tank. The robot fighters are equipped with rockets, cannons and lasers, but also fight hand-to-hand, using karate and jujitsu. **Middle:** Athena (Anne-Marie Johnson) at the controls of a robot fighter. **Far Right:** His robot destroyed, Achilles (Gary Graham) tries to fight on.





# OX

## Scripted by Joe Haldeman

effects technology that is available today.”

Enter Charlie Band. The young Empire chairman (who is executive producing the movie) financed a 90-second effects promo reel featuring the miniature work of David Allen. The reel got such a positive response when shown at last year's Cannes Film Market that Empire scrapped its own previously announced big budget effects project, *DECAPITRON*, to make room for *ROBOJOX*. Allen's effects reel now appears as the movie's prologue.

To come up with a screenplay, Gordon hired science fiction writer Joe Haldeman, with whom Gordon had worked on a Chicago stage version of the author's award-winning *THE FOREVER WAR*. New York-based Dennis Paoli (*FROM BEYOND*) provided rewrites. The film's robots and futuristic look were designed by famed production illustrator Ron Cobb. The story, based on Homer's *The Iliad*, is set 100 years in the future. The world, rebuilding from a nuclear war, is divided into two super powers: the Common Market of the West and the Confederation of the Soviet bloc. War is banned and has been replaced by hand-to-hand combat between gigantic fighting machines piloted by Robojox.

“A Robojock is kind of a cross between an astronaut, a quarterback and a fighter pilot,” said Gordon. “He represents his country and is acclaimed a hero. They are all given fighting names which are very heroic, such as Achilles or Hercules.” In the story, a new breed of genetically engi-



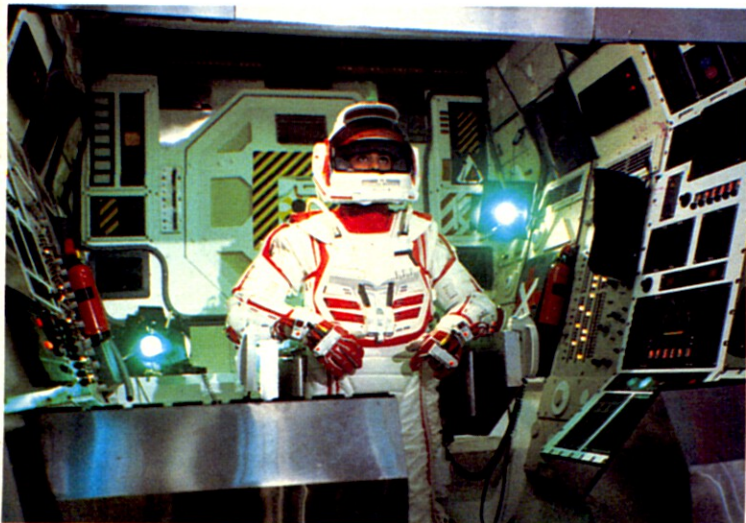
A Common Market pilot prepares to board his fighting robot and face an opponent from the Soviet Bloc.

neered Robojock is emerging on the scene. One of the main characters is Athena (Anne Marie Johnson), a “genjob” or genetically engineered Robojock. Achilles (Gary Graham), the West's champion, calls her a “tubie,” for test tube baby. When Achilles refuses to fight anymore, Athena is chosen to fight in his place, but since he's fallen in love with her, he cannot allow her to risk her life. She is pitted against Alexander (Paul Koslo), an undefeated Soviet pilot.

The visual effects of *ROBOJOX* will be a combination of go-motion animation and mechanically controlled miniatures. Gordon cited the Imperial Walkers sequence of *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK* as a reference. Effects supervisor David Allen is working with two different scale robots; the smaller ones (2 feet tall) are being used for stop motion work, while bigger 4-foot replicas are being used for explosions.

According to Gordon, one of the reasons the effects are taking so long is that Allen is shooting in sunlight out in the desert to incorporate real mountains and skies as a backdrop. The vastness of the desert is being used to combine the miniature robots with vast cheering throngs of spectators by shooting the cable-controlled models up close with a stadium set far in the background. Like the famous oil-tanker-in-the-desert scene in Spielberg's *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS: THE SPECIAL EDITION*, the forced perspective technique gives the effect a seamless look.

Allen is also shooting background plates for stop-motion work to be completed at his own studio. “I think the effects are really going to blow people's minds,” said Gordon. “Although this is Empire's largest budget, anyone else attempting this picture would want to budget three times as much.” □





# DEAD HEAT

**Off-beat tale of zombie cops could be the summer's sleeper hit.**

By Steve  
Biodrowski

DEAD HEAT starts like a typical cops-and-robbers yarn with Treat Williams and Joe Piscopo playing a pair of L. A. P. D. detectives on the trail of a gang of robbers who have fearlessly carried out six hold-ups in three weeks. When Detectives Roger Mortis (Williams) and Doug Bigelow (Piscopo) finally manage to gun the robbers down, assistant coroner Dr. Rebecca Smythers (Clare Kirconnel) discovers that the corpses had already been autopsied by her two weeks earlier. The trail leads Mortis, Bigelow and Smythers to the laboratories of Dante Pharmaceutical, where they discover a "resurrection table" that can

revive corpses—but only for 12 hours at a time. When Mortis is murdered, his partner and Dr. Smythers place him on the table and revive him. Mortis is animated but not really alive. He has only 12 hours to find his killers before deteriorating.

New World Pictures plans to open DEAD HEAT May 6. The film's premise sounds like a horror version of the 1949 noir classic D.O.A. in which Edmund O'Brien played a detective dying of a slow-working poison who raced to find his own murderers. Coincidentally, Walt Disney is set to release its own re-make called DEAD ON ARRIVAL on



Comedian Joe Piscopo as zombie cop Doug Bigelow, in makeup by Kenny Myers. Though humorous, the film, to be released by New World Pictures May 6, is not a comedy.

March 18, just weeks before DEAD HEAT opens.

The New World picture was the first project to be greenlighted for newly formed Helpen/Meltzer Productions. The film also marks the directing debut of editor Mark Goldblatt and the screenwriting debut of Terry Black, the older brother of screenwriter and actor Shane Black (LETHAL WEAPON). A frequent and welcome visitor to the set, Black lounged in a trailer and explained the genesis of the project.

"I wanted to tell a detective story," said Black. "The problem was I wanted to have an

original gimmick. Detective stories have been done to death, so to speak. Kojak has his lollipop; Columbo has his raincoat. I decided my detective would be *dead*. Never been done before! It goes D.O.A. one better. Immediately a half dozen scenes suggested themselves to me. I thought it was very fertile ground for a screenplay.

"I love premises that are really sort of low-brow, sort of juvenile," he continued. "Only, instead of treating it like a juvenile story, the way so many other films seem to do, you make it transcend itself—you make it a story about a three-dimensional character, with adult values and themes, things that an adult could watch and not get insulted by—in spite of the fact that there's bullets flying and blood spurting! The best recent example of this is THE FLY. This was a movie about a guy who turns into an insect, yet if you look at it carefully, there's food for thought—concerning the nature of human identity, how it feels to be alive, and what it means to be human."

Black wrote the script in a white heat from start to finish ("I recommend that as a method of working—you'd be surprised how good you can work under pressure.") The script was in development for a year with producers David Helpen and Michael Meltzer, who asked for rewrites to provide a







Treat Williams as zombie cop Roger Mortis. After surviving an explosion (inset), Mortis removes shrapnel from his face but leaves a piece dangling from his ear like an earring. The punk zombie look was designed by makeup man Steve Johnson.

more coherent storyline, with better motivation and logic. "I have a tendency to think in terms of these great scenes," said Black. "The scenes were what I really wanted to do. How I got to them was the weak link, because who cares?"

An element of concern to Black and the makers of *DEAD HEAT* is what audiences are going to expect from the film. Although Black's script is filled with humor (it was even turned down by one producer who thought there shouldn't be humor in a horror film), it was not intended to be a comedy. The filmmakers stress that the casting of Joe Piscopo does not mean the film will be a parody like most of the comedian's previous work. Rather, the relationship between Piscopo and Williams, they said, is closer to that between Nick Nolte and Eddie Murphy in *48 HOURS*.

"That's the impression we're trying to avoid: that because Piscopo's in it, it's not meant to be taken seriously," said Black. "The film is not a spoof, not a send-up. It is part horror-story, part detective-story. It has a very serious theme. There's a lot of humor in it, and a lot of Piscopo's brand of

humor, but it's humor that underscores the horror rather than contradicts it. Stuff like that is an interesting inversion—the reason it's so funny is it's horrible. I'm always looking for ways to make jokes but without sacrificing the horror."

Black is interrupted momentarily by the arrival of Treat Williams, who steps into the trailer from the film's set to make a phone call. Seeing Terry Black, Williams smiles affably, but the effect is far from what he intended. At the moment, his face is covered by makeup supervisor Steve Johnson's prosthetic handiwork, which gives the impression not only that Williams is in an advanced state of decomposition but that he's survived an explosion as well. Prompted by this intrusion, Black takes a moment to praise the work of Johnson and his crew.

"The special effects have been consistently better than *anything I imagined*," said Black. "Someone pointed out to me that at the same time that half of Williams' face is blown off and he looks so dreadful, there is a kind of—charm is the wrong word—there is a kind of an appeal to him, a kind of mutilated macho. This is some-



thing very subtle that the makeup people brought out wonderfully."

On the soundstage outside Joe Piscopo walked by, wearing a light grease paint makeup for a scene toward the end of the film where he, too, returns from the dead. This makeup, as well as the early grease paint stages of Treat Williams' makeup, is the work of Kenny Myers, who came on to the picture after supervising the effects and makeup for RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD—PART 2. Piscopo said he wasn't feeling well due to the arduous makeup process but nevertheless he became genuinely animated as he talked about working on the film.

"For me it's like acting out a fantasy," said Piscopo. "When I was younger I always liked the 'sci-fi' flicks and fighting monsters." Although Piscopo had been busy filming Miller Lite commercials and preparing an HBO special to be broadcast live at Halloween, he cleared a space in his schedule to film DEAD HEAT because he felt it was the right kind of role for him to play at this point in his career. "It's not too far removed from me when I'm in a silly mood," he said of Detective Bigelow, his character. "He's a wise guy, and he thinks he's a tough guy. The character was cool. That appealed to me most. I was afraid

Screenwriter Terry Black observes as makeup supervisor Steve Johnson reads the film's zombie extras.



Mortis' girlfriend Randi James (Lindsay Frost) gets menaced by a zombie.

the film would have too much blood in it. They assured me it would not have any gratuitous violence."

Piscopo has been bringing a lot of his own humor to the role, coming up with lines which were not in the script—a process writer Terry Black approves of. "He's been very gracious about that," said Piscopo. "I've always respected writers, because it's probably the hardest thing to do. It's nice when a guy let's you ask, 'Can I say this?' I've never seen a writer hang around the set—they chase them away. But this has been such a family picture."

Despite Piscopo's enthusiasm, the long hours are wearing him down. "Film is slow, especially when you've got to sit in the chair for 6 hours while they put the makeup on," he said. "Treat's been here a lot longer than I have, so I better not complain."

"With SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE I've been in every type of prosthetic possible, so I was glad I didn't have to be put in heavy makeup, because it's not the most pleasant experience in the world. But it's a serious art form, man. I always say to them, 'Why didn't you become a surgeon?' because they're so meticulous. It probably would have been less work—easier hours, that's for sure."

The extensive effects which Steve Johnson's crew was called on to provide include several zombie thieves and assassins, a butcher-shop full of dead animals that return to life, and a scene in which Mortis' girlfriend Randi James (Lindsay Frost) completely deteriorates, her body literally

falling apart in front of the detective's eyes.

Johnson's approach to Treat Williams as a zombie cop was "to make him look like a punk kind of superhero," he said. "At one point his costume is so bullet-ridden he has to change clothes, so he changes into a much wilder costume. At the beginning, he's so straight, he's almost a Jerry Lewis-type. Treat's attitude about the role was that the deader he becomes, the more alive he feels—not necessarily physically, but mentally. He begins to appreciate things and lets loose a lot more."

Besides hails of bullets, Williams also survives a bombing. "After the explosion we make him go totally punk," said Johnson. "We made his clothes almost black. We put rips in cool places, like people might purposefully do. We spike his hair as though the explosion had done it. We punished him more on one side of the face, because to look at something asymmetrical is a lot more inter-

esting. We imagined that the shrapnel may have flown and stuck into his face: he throws most of it out, but he's got a couple pieces that stay dangling in his ears, like earrings."

On the set, the crew is filming a scene in which mad scientist Vincent Price tries to sell his friends on using the resurrection table to gain eternal life. Since the character is not actually on-camera at the moment, director Mark Goldblatt, per his usual custom, is filling in for Price, reading the lines while filming reaction shots of the other characters. Price wanders over, wearing a small appliance on his cheek, applied by Myers, to make it appear as though his skin is peeling away to reveal a rotting interior.

It is surprising to find Price here, considering his alleged avowal never to do another horror film after the huge disappointment of THE OFF-SPRING. Fortunately for fans of the genre, Price relented upon seeing the script for DEAD HEAT. "It's a very cute script," said Price, who described his character as "the fellow who sponsors the machine and tries to get his rich friends to go on into eternal life. It's the kind of small part that pays off. It's well-written—a little humor, preposterous in the right way—and adds to the plot. It isn't just a familiar face walking by, which bores the shit out of me."

While cinematographer Bob Yeoman (TO LIVE AND DIE IN L. A.) re-lights the set for another sequence, director Mark Goldblatt has a moment to talk. Goldblatt has been wanting to direct for a long

Producers David Helpert (l) and Michael Meltzer with Vincent Price, the mad scientist behind the revived corpses, and first-time director Mark Goldblatt (r).





time. After earning a degree in philosophy, he attended film school in London, then worked for New World Pictures during the Roger Corman days, where he worked with Joe Dante and Jon Davison on HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD. Co-editing PIRANHA and THE HOWLING with Dante led to other editing jobs such as THE TERMINATOR, RAMBO, and COMMANDO. Then Davison hired him to shoot 2nd unit on ROBOCOP. By this time Goldblatt had already plugged into the DEAD HEAT script, but a regime change at New World delayed production. Finally after several rewrites, he got the green light.

Goldblatt is high on the film's action-oriented script, but feels it has other dimensions. "I love that action stuff, and I think I'm good at staging it, but there's also personal drama," he said. "I don't mean 'Drama' with a capital 'D,' but there is a definite serious side to this picture, leavened with humor. It's about coming to terms with life and death, coming to terms with yourself. It's not like I've got a message I'm gonna lay on people, but if I'm going to devote six months of my life to something, it's gotta have meaning for me.

"I love horror films," continued Goldblatt. "I love suspense. I'm really interested in the darker side of things—that's my fascination. If I have a choice, I always go to the Dario Argento picture as opposed to something mainstream. I love Argento, Mario Bava, Alfred Hitchcock. They are strong influences on my life. But I think directing is reflective of living. It's not just a love of movies. People like Ford and Hawks didn't study movies to make their movies."

Speaking of influences, the name "Dante Pharmaceutical" seems an obvious reference to Joe Dante—the kind of inside joke Dante himself would insert into a film. Is

## Z O M B I E T R E A T W I L L I A M S

**“Do the dead breathe? Do they get hungry? Do they sleep? During filming it was intriguing to take the idea of being a zombie seriously. What do they do when they're not out working, doing what zombies do?”**



Lenny MacDonald (l) and Steve Johnson work on Joe Piscopo in his zombie guise. The film's offbeat humor stems from the real way the film's characters react to becoming one of the living dead.

Dante a big influence on Goldblatt? "He views everything through a humorous edge," said Goldblatt. "That appeals to me, because I feel you must view the world humorously, to a degree. I would never make anything straight. I can't look on the world like that—I'd go crazy. I think there's something wickedly, fiendishly amusing about the horror world. Which isn't to say you laugh at it—I don't believe in parody."

When Bob Yeoman finishes relighting the set, Goldblatt returns to work. This time he's filming shots of star Treat Williams confronting villains Price and Darren McGavin. The hour is late, and everyone has been working since early in the morning, but they manage to keep their level of enthusiasm high while the cameras are rolling. In between takes, while Goldblatt is coaching the other actors, Treat Williams steps over to comment on the script.

"The first time I saw it, I knew there was something very special about it," he said.

"It was realistic in its approach to the characters. Consequently, I felt the humor was a lot deeper and more fun. Rather than just reacting to the horror, you are involved with and interested in the characters, which makes it pay off more. In this genre that's difficult to do, but that's what we're trying to do.

"We approached this from a very honest point of view," continued Williams. "We were faced with a lot of problems. Do the dead breathe? Do they get hungry? Do they sleep? It was intriguing to take the idea of being a zombie seriously. What do they do when they're not out working, doing what zombies do?"

"I'm not playing it like a guy who's dead," said Williams. "I'm playing it more like D.O.A. He's got nine hours to live in D.O.A. In this film he has about 11 or 12 hours—not to live but to deteriorate. But it's the same thing: he knows he has about 12 hours of consciousness left, so he's a cop who has to deal with this awareness that he's gonna be

gone."

Williams finds the six to eight hour makeup job a hassle but acknowledges that the results are worth it: "I find it much easier to do the acting than to sit still. They keep slapping me and telling me to shut up and sit still—it's my nature. I'm working with someone I consider one of the best in Hollywood, Steve Johnson. He had, luckily, the same idea about Roger's transformation: we wanted to do things differently, with a new twist. I would attribute 90% of it to Steve Johnson. I just gave him suggestions and input on what he'd already built. It's funny because normal expressions become different under the makeup. I have to rely on Mark Goldblatt to tell me if something works or does not work. He has an absolutely assured opinion of what he wants, which makes him easy to work with.

"I think the transformation—that the more dead Roger gets, the more alive he becomes—is the key," continued Williams. "That, plus the idea that we're doing a film where we don't make fun of the material but we take it very seriously—but not so serious the audience cannot enjoy it. The special effects are wonderful, but I've seen a lot of films that have gorgeous special effects without any kind of meat—it's all icing. I think Terry Black's written a wonderful story, and I think that's what intrigued all of us. That's why Vincent Price did it—a lot of people were interested because the story's so strange, and so much fun."

As Williams is called back to shooting, he said that the filming, despite its rigors and hardships, has been enjoyable. "We've been working hours that are double normal due to the fact that we have a limited budget and a lot of special effects," he said. "For instance, my makeup took eight hours; then my eight hour shooting day begins. It would be more fun if we slept a little more." □



# COMING

## THE SEVENTH SIGN

Australian filmmaker Carl Schultz takes a high-powered cast into OMEN territory.

By Ron Magid

When it comes to end of the world pictures, most filmmakers tend to portray our planet's demise with much more of a bang than a whimper. Director Carl Schultz's new film, *THE SEVENTH SIGN*, should prove a welcome change for those who think the apocalypse will be the result of a more subtle—though equally devastating—cataclysm than that usually portrayed in movies of this small but pervasive genre. *Tri-Star* is set to open the film nationally March 25.

Though the premise is based on predictions from the Bible that foretell the end of the world, Schultz' focus is on the intimate story of a woman (Demi Moore) who believes the birth of her baby is an omen of Armageddon. Schultz, a director known for low-key dramas like last year's affecting *CAREFUL, HE MIGHT HEAR YOU*, is pleased with the subtle nuances and shadings that distinguish this film from *THE*

*OMEN* series; he terms the film "a psychological thriller." Said Schultz, "The attraction for me, was the internal story. It can be interpreted as something that's actually happening or something in the heroine's imagination."

The Hungarian-born director of numerous Australian films uses surrealistic dream imagery to tell the story through Moore's recurring nightmares. "I tend to treat the dreams in a not so dreamlike manner," said Schultz. "I think of dream images as very real, so I don't use soft focus or slow motion. Even though the image might be bizarre, the way of looking at them in the film is to present them as real."

Schultz is another in a long line of Australian filmmakers who've been lured to America, though he insists his base will remain in Australia. For Schultz, the attraction was to work with a top international cast. In addition to Moore, in her first adult role as the expectant mother, *THE SEVENTH SIGN* features *ALIENS'* Michael



Meteorologists puzzle about a freak snowstorm in the desert, one of the omens of Armageddon foretold by a strange boarder to the pregnant woman who houses him.

Biehn as her husband, and *DUNE's* Juergen Prochnow as a mysterious boarder.

Schultz found that filming the story's vast array of floor effects depicting natural disasters was a severe test of his abilities. "The film was difficult to make, but enjoyable," he said. "We were on a tight schedule."

Schultz' approach to the film's fantasy elements is reminiscent of the philosophy of '40s fantasy film producer Val Lewton. "I often

find that things are best left to the audience's imagination rather than showing things literally," Schultz said. "The most horrific monsters are the ones you don't see. I think that holds true for effects. I'm trying to keep our optical effects down to the minimum sufficient to suggest what's happening to the audience rather than depicting it literally. We wanted to create something strange, something unusual, yet something that looked real." □

## PAGING MR. SPOCK

Leonard Nimoy's directing success delays start of *STAR TREK V*.

By Daniel M. Kimmel

Leonard Nimoy's success as a movie director will further delay the start of *STAR TREK V* which William Shatner is scheduled to helm. As a result of the phenomenal success of *STAR TREK IV: THE VOYAGE HOME* Nimoy has been tied up with a number of film projects as a director. In a public appearance to promote his latest film, the mainstream hit *THREE MEN AND A BABY*, Nimoy also gave his reaction to the new television series, *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION*.

During a question and answer session with a Boston audience that had just previewed *BABY*, Nimoy noted that, "I had to work very hard after Spock to dig out acting opportunities that were not Spock-like. On the other hand, in the directing career, I very quickly

found the opportunity for a wide range of material. I was very surprised after *STAR TREK IV* that I was offered films like [*BABY*]. I was offered *LETHAL WEAPON*. I was offered *STAKEOUT*."

This winter Nimoy is scouting locations in Boston and Toronto for *THE GOOD MOTHER*, a domestic drama, scheduled to begin shooting in March. "At the moment, there's a lot more momentum to my directing career than there is in my acting career," he said.

Outside of the *STAR TREK* films Nimoy has no desire to both act and direct on the same project. "It is extremely difficult," he said. "I have been helped by the fact that I've been doing a character that I had already been around with for some time. I would rather not go through the character search process, discovering and developing a character while I'm directing the

film myself."

Most interesting of his comments was his mixed reaction to the new *STAR TREK* television series. Asked what he thought of the program he replied, "Strangely enough, for whatever reason, I have not seen a lot of them." He noted that the new series is "extremely handsomely mounted" commenting, "I'm jealous when I compare these episodes with what we had to work with in the way of production values in the '60s."

While Nimoy hesitated to criticize the show, it was a subject he wasn't eager to talk about. "I'm not sure I'm in touch with the content yet," he said. "I don't quite get it yet, and that's not really fair because I haven't watched a lot of it." Not wanting to appear overly critical, he added, "The people who are making those shows are friends of mine. I certainly wish them well." □



Leonard Nimoy directed last year's big Christmas hit *THREE MEN AND A BABY* for Walt Disney Productions.



# W-I-L-L-O-W

## George Lucas hires "Opie Wan Kenobi" to direct STAR WARS set in a Sword & Sorcery mold.

By Allen Malmquist

Once upon a May 25, George Lucas opened STAR WARS, creating a science fiction boom which moved the genre into mainstream moviegoing. He unintentionally pulled this off by tightening the excitement of space opera, with production values far outstripping the old serials, and drawing out the mythic values inherent within. Now, eleven years later, he hopes to duplicate this success: WILLOW, based on a story by executive producer Lucas, attempts to tap the roots of British Isle and European mythology and achieve in the fantasy format what STAR WARS did in science fiction. MGM/UA opens the film May 25.



George Lucas



Ron Howard

Lucasfilm flops like HOWARD THE DUCK, WILLOW is an expensive gamble—although no one is admitting how expensive (rumor puts it at \$40 million). The film opens against competition like RAMBO III and CROCODILE DUNDEE II.

The tale follows one Willow Ufgood as he seeks safety for his infant charge, a babe destined to bring down the evil reign of Queen Bavmorda. Along the way they meet elves and fairies, madmen and mad dogs, sorcery-full monsters and monstrous sorceresses. Jean Marsh, villain of the ill-fated RETURN TO OZ, plays the evil Queen, Joanne Whalley portrays her

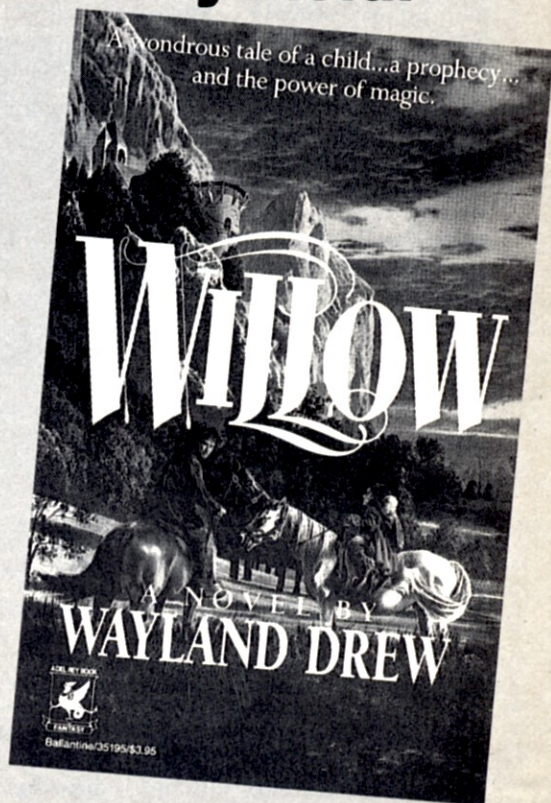
daughter Sorsha, Val Kilmer (REAL GENIUS, TOP SECRET) the at-times heroic Madmartigan, and Warwick Davis, out of his Ewok suit, the title character.

Penned by TV comedy writer Bob Dolman (WKRP IN CINCINNATI), WILLOW's storyline is tried and true. Both the screenplay and its novelization reveal a basic good versus evil plot, and its underlying substance reflects the core of much classic fantasy. The character of Willow, for all intents and purposes a Hobbit, duplicates one important facet of J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy: he's a little guy, living a peaceful secluded life, who is suddenly thrust into a world-determining adventure. Willow leaves his village because of a powerful talisman much the same as Hobbit Frodo Baggins left Hobbiton. It's the same way Lucas began his STAR WARS saga. Luke Skywalker journeys out from his backwater desert planet to take part in the Grand Conflict. It's a powerful concept, the Everyman hero.

Of course, Luke turned out to be not so ordinary, a farmboy who learned to fly and shoot on his own, but also a hereditary possessor of the mystic Force. Willow also makes his own inroads. Here the power is Magic, defined mainly as a focus of one's will. Yoda wouldn't find the discipline so unusual. While one set of characters engage on the plane of sorcery, another contingent duking it out on the field of battle. Jedi and starfighters become magicians and their knights.

Madmartigan, key player in WILLOW's combat category, shares much with Frodo's human companion, Aragorn. But as a love interest and moralist, Madmartigan shares more with our old friend Han Solo, starting out as a mercenary swaggert, but not ending that way. Unfortunately, WILLOW's denouement fails to follow *The Lord of the Rings*'s example of victory tempered with uncured pain for both the world and its main characters, instead following the no-loss success, evil redeemed, and all's well formula Lucas plied with STAR WARS. Victory has a far greater impact if, realistically, a price has been paid.

It's a shame really that the STAR WARS/WILLOW parallels are so glar-



ing, since the fantasy realm—even this subset of the epic struggle between good and evil—can be conjured up in a wide variety of forms. WILLOW underutilizes its mythic races and mystical places. It sticks to a fairly straightforward action/chase adventure. The one brief moment of magic which existed in the film's first-draft screenplay—elves abducting a baby, teasing it to tears in order to collect water for dewdrops—was later excised.

But the deja-vu nature of WILLOW's overall design could take a backseat if director Ron Howard can conjure up the grandeur and sparkle of epic fantasy. The components of WILLOW's story still bear the impact of the icons from which they were born, and are interesting in and of themselves, from the manic craziness of Madmartigan to the ethereal glow of the fairie queen. But conjuring epic fantasy on the screen hasn't been easy, judging from the string of expensive flops from talented filmmakers like John Milius (CONAN, THE BARBARIAN), Ridley Scott (LEGEND), Ralph Bakshi (LORD OF THE RINGS), and Walt Disney Productions

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# 976-EVIL

*Robert Englund, Elm Street's Freddy, makes his directing debut.*

By Frederick C. Szebin

Nerdy Stephen Geoffreys, the memorable Evil Ed of *FRIGHT NIGHT*, has tapped into *Horrorscope*, a dial-in service that any vengeance-hungry shnook would love. The "devilish" voice of *Horrorscope* foretells futures, reveals fortunes and allows Geoffreys to take possession of his life—as it takes possession of him. "It's a classic gothic horror story, harkening back to old films like *THE DEVIL AND DANIEL WEBSTER* and *ALL THAT MONEY CAN BUY*," said first-time director Robert Englund, better known to horror buffs as everybody's favorite Elm Street deviant, Freddy Krueger.

Englund used his success as Freddy to nab the directorial reins on *976-EVIL*, scripted by longtime friend Rhett Topham, whose *TRICK OR TREAT* served to introduce another actor, Charles Martin Smith, to the director's chair. Englund's stage directing experience helped convince Cinetel production execs to give him the job. The company plans to release the film in May. Englund said *ELM STREET* series producer New Line Cinema had been considered as a possible distributor.

Englund would have preferred a quiet character study to a horror film, but since a good script had



Stephen Geoffreys turns demonic after tapping into a phone service from the beyond, makeup designed by Kevin Yagher.

come his way, he ran with it and gathered a talented cast, which included Geoffreys, acclaimed actress Sandy Dennis, as his shrewish Aunt Lucy, newcomers Patrick O'Bryan and Leslie Dean, Jim (TEX) Metzler and genre veteran Robert (THE HOWLING) Picardo. Englund decided to back away on performing as well as directing, although he will add background voices to certain scenes.

The actor-cum-director said he was determined to get the most out of his \$2 million budget, which was stretched to the limit as extra effects were added at the last minute. "There weren't a lot of visuals in the original script," he said. "It was mostly makeup effects. The added effects took a chunk out of our budget, so I was rushed in the filming of other scenes, which made me shoot in a way that didn't allow for a lot of coverage."

The added effects sequence in question is a visual manifestation of the term "hell freezing over." By the end of the film, Geoffreys is totally possessed and exerts that power by icing his entire house from the ground up. Elm Street makeup veteran Kevin Yagher was in charge of the makeup effects, which include Geoffreys' gradual mutation into a *Horrorscope* becomes more pronounced.

Although Yagher's always-effective makeup effects will be showcased, Englund promised that his film will opt for atmosphere over

gore. "There is one sequence that is almost gory," he admitted, "but it's more implied than actually shown. Somebody's hand is cut off. It's a pay-off to the old joke about a dead man's hand in a poker game. There is a little of the drippy stuff in the movie, I'm not going to deny that. It comes with the genre. But *976-EVIL* isn't anywhere near the *ELM STREET* films in that respect. It's more gothic in tone. If it's about anything, it would be about envy and temptation."

The only tie *976-EVIL* could claim to the *ELM STREET* series is a rather nasty sense of humor, which manifests itself in the form of a parrot straggling sequence. The bothersome bird spends the movie nagging people about Aunt Lucy's plastic-covered sofa, until demonized Geoffreys gives Polly a bone-crushing payback. "I'm hoping the audience will laugh," said Englund, about the scene. "There's a line that I won't divulge now, but it's sort of a comic Freddy or Clint Eastwood line."

Englund admitted the project has been a handful for a fledgling director, but said his experience with effects as an actor on *V* and the *ELM STREET* films was helpful. "I knew how much could go wrong," he said. "Some just didn't come out. It's always the little things that are time-consuming. We have a spider attack sequence with a lot of smoky atmosphere. The smoke made the spiders very docile, so after a take or two they wouldn't move. Here we were, trying to create dramatic tension and terror as a bunch of grown men just out of camera range with straws in their mouths were running around blowing air on the spiders just to get the stupid things to move. It gets a little silly when it's four in the morning and you've been up for 30 hours and the spiders aren't budging."

With a lean and busy seven weeks of principal photography wrapped, Englund hoped to add an orchestral score, which he believed would enhance the gothic feel he is striving for. "I'm proud of the movie we've made," he said. □

## BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE RELEASE OF DEG TIME-TRAVEL OPUS NOW UP IN THE AIR

As *DEG* teetered on the edge of financial collapse early this year, they scrapped the planned release of *BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE*, scheduled for March 25, in an effort to try and sell it and the rest of the company's film inventory to other distributors. Though the strategy has brought some infusion of cash to the company (MGM has reportedly picked-up Stan Winston's *PUMPKINHEAD*) most of *DEG's* films, including *BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE*, have had no takers.

Directed by *CRITTERS* helmer Stephen Herek, the film follows teenagers Keanu Reeves (*THE RIVER'S EDGE*) and Alexander Winter (*THE LOST BOYS*) as they travel through time to



The three most important dudes in the world, 700 years in the future.

help prepare for a final exam. *DEG* described the film as "equal parts Mark Twain, Monty Python, and rock 'n' roll." The script is by young screenwriters Chris Matheson (son of fantasy screenwriter Richard Matheson) and Ed Solomon, buddies who developed the time-travelling duo originally as part of a comedy improvisational group.

The time-travelling teens meet Napoleon, Socrates, Genghis Khan, Sigmund Freud, Joan of Arc, Beethoven, Billy the Kid and Abraham Lincoln, and bring the historic figures back with them to the '80s (Joan of Arc runs an aerobics class). □

Englund, flashing a Freddy smile, directing on the set for Cinetel Films.





# CRITTERS II

**New Line Cinema unleashes their toothy ETs to take another bite of movie boxoffice profits.**

By Taylor L. White

In October of last year, New Line Cinema accompanied its national release of *THE HIDDEN* with a preview trailer promoting their upcoming release *CRITTERS 2*, touting "The Bite Is Back!" At the time, not a single frame of film had been shot, though the sequel to their quirky 1986 film (about the violent attack on a Kansas farm family by a band of carnivorous furballs from outer space) was set to open just six months later on April 22.

*CRITTERS 2* picks up two years after the events in the original, leaving plenty of time for the Critter eggs glimpsed at the end of the first film to incubate. Scott Grimes, now 16, returns to Grover's Bend to visit grandmother Herta Ware for Easter. When the Critter eggs are unwittingly discovered in the empty farmhouse, they mistakenly become part of the town's annual Easter egg hunt. And when the eggs, numbering into the hundreds, are exposed to the warmth of the sun, they invariably hatch, unleashing hordes of hungry Critters to feed on the townspeople.

At the helm is writer/director Mick Garris, whose only previous experience behind the camera includes *FUZZBUCKET*, a Disney Sunday Movie, and an effective, stylish segment of *AMAZING STORIES* (titled "Life on Death Row,") starring Patrick Swayze. Garris served as *AMAZING STORY*'s story editor its first season, and wrote several episodes during the series' two year stint.

Garris was attracted to *CRITTERS 2* after reading the script by David Twohey, who later bowed-out after two rewrites. Also attractive was the certainty of knowing that the



Alien bounty hunter Terrence Mann tracks down a Hexapod in the film's opening, all teeth and tentacles, constructed by special makeup artist Chris Biggs.

film was assured of getting made and released to 1200 theatres in April. Just prior to *CRITTERS 2*, Garris scripted several drafts of *THE FLY II* for Brookfilms. New Line sweetened the deal by giving Garris ample creative input on the project, plus the opportunity to re-write Twohey's screenplay to his satisfaction.

"If I could not make a good movie out of this it would basically be career suicide," said Garris. "It may well be anyway," he added jokingly. Garris liked the original. "It probably would never have gotten financing had there never been a *GREMLINS*," he said. "But I thought it had a good balance of story and humor. It played the characters for real and it just had a great look and was a lot of fun."

In keeping with the original, Garris has filled the sequel with a variety of characters which he described as "straight out of Norman Rockwell." The director said he was fortunate in obtaining his first casting choices, including Ware, Barry Corbin as the town's sheriff, and stage

actor Douglas Rowe, who plays a drunken antiques store owner. Besides Scott Grimes, returning from the first picture are Terrence Mann, as the rock star alien bounty hunter and Don Opper, as bumpkin Charlie, who during the two-year duration has left earth to join the aliens and returns with Mann to exterminate the Critters once again.

Producer Barry Opper said he credits much of the first film's success to its video release. Theatrically, *CRITTERS* grossed an okay \$13 million, but sold an estimated 115,000 videocassettes. Opper said the film's PG-13 rating helped develop a sizable youth audience, and that the sequel is aiming to do the same.

To insure that *CRITTERS 2* tops the original in terms of scale and production value, New Line increased the budget to the range of \$4-5 million, more than twice that of the original, but still a modest sum by today's standards. A large chunk went toward construction of the mock town of Grover's Bend where most of the

nine weeks of shooting took place. Located in the hills of rural Newhall, California, the town featured a wide assortment of structures, including a church and a hamburger factory.

The movie's expanded budget also allowed for more elaborate special effects. The multi-talented Chiodo brothers—Steven, Charlie and Edward—are once again handling the Critter effects. The trio along with head mechanic Dwight Roberts and crew managed to tackle the extensive mechanical puppetry in *CRITTERS 2* while still in post-production on their own first feature, *KILLER KLOWNS FROM OUTER SPACE* (18:2/3:25).

Due to the time and budgetary restrictions of the first *CRITTERS*, the original porcupine-like furballs, numbering eight, with most standing 13" tall, were manipulated by as many as ten cables allowing

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Director Mick Garris with one of the Critters created by the Chiodo brothers.





# SPIDERMAN—THE MOVIE & SUPERMAN V

Albert Pyun to direct Cannon SF trio, including MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE 2.

By Kris Gilpin

Albert Pyun, who directed the 1982 independent hit *SWORD AND THE SORCERER*, seems to be set to direct just about everything on Cannon Films' production slate. Besides directing *ALIEN FROM L.A.*, set in the underground civilization of Atlantis, which Cannon opened February 26, Pyun is scheduled to direct *MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE 2*, *SPIDERMAN—THE MOVIE* and *SUPERMAN V*.

Pyun, a Hawaiian filmmaker who got his start as a production assistant on Akira Kurosawa's *DERSU UZALA*, wrote the storyline for the *MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE* sequel. Since the first film was not a big hit, why does Cannon, facing severe financial problems, want to do another one? Pyun said it was a question everyone had. "Cannon thought they had enough equity built into the project with the name, and Mattel wanted to do another one," said Pyun. "Cannon wanted me to do it, I guess, the way they'd hoped the first one had turned out."

Seeking to appeal to a larger audience, Pyun said the screenplay at this time is skirting a hard R-rating for its grim action. "It's very lean and mean right now," he said. "It'll probably end up with a very hard PG-13. People die in this one, and the heroes pretty much get wiped out." Starting totally



Albert Pyun directs underground Atlanteans from Cannon's *ALIEN FROM L.A.*

fresh this time around, the tone and look of the sequel will be new, which includes the cast. Set to star is Kathy Ireland, the stunning blonde former *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit model who headed the cast in Pyun's *ALIEN FROM L.A.*, as underground explorer Wanda Saknussem.

Pyun was scheduled to shoot *MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE 2* back-to-back with *SPIDERMAN—THE MOVIE* early this year at the Dino DeLaurentiis stu-

dios in Wilmington, North Carolina, but production has been postponed. "We're making them back to back," said Pyun. "We shoot a week of *SPIDERMAN*, which is all the sections before he gets bitten, then we go into 2½ months of *MASTERS 2*, and then we resume *SPIDERMAN*."

Cannon had set *MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE 2* for an August 5th release with *SPIDERMAN* scheduled for Christmas. "We're working with Stan Lee and

Marvel Comics on *SPIDERMAN*," said Pyun. Previously Cannon had scheduled the *SPIDERMAN* film for director Joe Zito (17:5:4) and Boaz Davison, though a legal dispute over the film rights is rumored to exist between Cannon and Marvel Comics (and Marvel's parent company New World Pictures).

Pyun said Cannon has scheduled *SUPERMAN V* for an October start date, with a new actor in the lead role if Christopher Reeve is unavailable. "We're kind of going back to what the original film was and getting away from the silliness that's gone on [in the later films]," said Pyun. "We're going for a much more realistic, much richer-looking vision of Superman. It'll be something you can get really involved in, not just effects and in-jokes."

Pyun said he planned to use Burbank-based Fantasy II for the effects of *MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE II* and *SPIDERMAN*, after being delighted with their work on *ALIEN FROM L.A.* "That was the best experience I've ever had [with special effects]," said Pyun. "They came in under budget and under schedule. The effects were better than they'd promised us and they actually threw in a couple additional effects shots because they thought the film needed it. They really care a lot. They're the best." □

## CYBERPUNK GOES HOLLYWOOD

NEAR DARK director Kathryn Bigelow films William Gibson story.

By Sheldon Teitelbaum

Director Kathryn Bigelow is trading in her fangs for a Mohawk. Having revamped vampire mythology last year with *NEAR DARK*, the 35 year-old filmmaker is moving into cyberpunk, a sub-genre of science fiction that combines the feel of *BLADERUNNER* or *MAX HEADROOM* with the pacing of MTV. The project is *NEW ROSE HOTEL*, based on a short story by William Gibson published in his anthology *Burning Chrome*. Gibson wrote the screenplay with Los Angeles science fiction writer John Shirley. Ed Pressman (*WALL STREET*) will produce.

Speaking from his home in Vancouver, Gibson told us that Bige-

low's interest in the project came as a surprise to both him and Shirley. "John told me Bigelow would be perfect. When I saw *NEAR DARK*, I realized why. But neither of us held out much hope she'd want to do it."

In fact, Bigelow revealed she had been a fan of Gibson's since his first novel, *Neuromancer*, came out in 1985, garnering virtually every award within the SF field and ample critical recognition from without. "He writes with a post-apocalyptic realism that I find terribly romantic," said Bigelow. "*NEW ROSE HOTEL* is a very adrenalinic piece of writing, a high velocity piece."

Bigelow announced that filming will likely begin in the fall, with most of the principal photography

slated for Japan. Bigelow noted that the film, which should have a "middle range budget," will "inevitably" possess a cyberpunk look, but she cautioned against assuming that it would bear the stamp of Syd Mead's retrofitted *BLADERUNNER* aesthetic. "It's a post-apocalyptic noir story," she said, "but Gibson's writing demands a departure from any references that have become familiar."

In keeping with cyberpunk's rock-oriented sensibility, former Sex Pistols manager Malcom McClaran has signed on to score the production. McClaran is presently involved in a Broadway adaptation of his album, *Fans*.

Gibson, meanwhile, is hard at work on a second draft of his script for *ALIEN III*. □





# POLTERGEIST

**Chicagoan Gary Sherman helmed the new sequel minus the usual optical effects trickery.**

*By Sharon Williams*

Producer Barry Bernardi summed it up. "POLTERGEIST III is about a high-rise haunted house. We also use the analogy of *Alice Through the Looking Glass* because in this film the poltergeists often manifest themselves on the "other side" through mirrors. And, the skyscraper in which the story is set has a very high-tech decor. There are a lot of mirrors." MGM releases the new sequel June 24.

The production was in the news earlier this year due to the tragic and unexpected death February 1st of its twelve-year-old star, Heather O'Rourke, who repeats her role as Carol Anne Freeling. O'Rourke died of a previously undiagnosed congenital intestinal obstruction after her work on the film had been completed. The news hit the Chicago-based production hard. Said publicist John Iltis, "Heather was such a bright, sweet kid. Everyone on the production loved her."

Though MGM had planned to conjure up a third installment in its profitable POLTERGEIST saga all along, the premise of suburban spooks had begun to wear thin. Impressed with director/writer Gary Sherman's recent actioner, WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE and his earlier horror

Carol Anne's aunt (Nancy Allen) grapples with a mirror image incarnation under the direction of the evil Reverend Kane (Nathan Davis), at the film's climax.



effort DEAD AND BURIED, the studio assigned Sherman and co-writer Brian Taggart the task of developing a new slant. Using existing material from the previous films, the scripters moved the story location out of the suburbs and into a large metropolitan area. For Sherman, born and raised in the Windy City, Chicago was the logical choice for both architectural and budgetary reasons.

The writers have given Steve and Diane Freeling a well-deserved rest from their progeny's psychic problems. This time Carol Anne moves in with her Aunt and Uncle, Bruce and Patricia Gardner (Tom Skerritt and Nancy Allen), and their 14 year-old daughter, Donna (Lara Flynn Boyle). The affluent family lives in the George Wellington Streeter Center, one of the world's tallest buildings, located on Chicago's near north side—the city's Hancock building served as the exterior. Carol Anne is attending the Seaton School for Exceptional Children. Exceptional, in this case, means that her relatives think she has one helluva vivid imagination. Reverend Kane, this time portrayed by Nathan Davis (Julian Beck, Kane in Part II, died) quickly changes their opinion of the situation. He finds out that Carol Anne is in Chicago, follows her there and the family is subjected to a surrealistic assortment of mind-blowing experiences. When all seems lost the pint-sized ghostbuster Tangina (Zelda Rubinstein) shows up, and eventually saves the day. Take that literally. It all happens within a 24-hour period.

Principal photography for POLTERGEIST III began last April, utilizing many of Chicago's famous locales. The Water Tower Shopping Atrium, the Lincoln Park Conservatory, and a 39-room, \$4 million Gold Coast mansion were all chosen as stand-ins for fictional portions of spook city. The last six weeks of shooting were completed at the Metropolitan Chicago Corporation studio complex on Chicago's near southwest side. In this former warehouse, 22,000 square feet of soundstage was constructed to film interior scenes such as the Gardner apartment, a parking garage and several areas of the George Wellington Streeter Center. These interiors, conceptualized by production designer Paul Eads, were important for



The late Heather O'Rourke returns as Carol Anne, menaced by a live-action spirit from the other side.

both POLTERGEIST III's sleek urban look, with lots of steel, chrome and mirrors, and the filming process itself.

Unlike its two predecessors, POLTERGEIST III will require no post-production optical laboratory work, said the filmmakers. Director Gary Sherman's decision to limit his moderately budgeted \$9 million production to physical effects and special effects makeup, was for two reasons, according to the film's producer. "Gary really wanted to prove that we could do the film using physical and mechanical effects," explained Bernardi, "and still achieve the same impact of the previous films. He also wanted to prove that cost overruns [which had plagued POLTERGEIST II] were not necessary to make a good special effects film. We put all *our* money on the screen."

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# FRIGHT NIGHT 2

**John Carpenter protege Tommy Lee Wallace helms sequel to vampire comedy.**

*By Steven Jongeward*

There is an old saying in the film business—"there will always be vampire movies until a stake is driven through the heart of every producer in Hollywood." There wouldn't be enough stakes to go around. Just ask producer Herb Jaffe, who made a mint from *FRIGHT NIGHT*, the 1985 Columbia release, directed by Tom Holland. Jaffe is producing the sequel, launching a series that augurs to become a trilogy (at least). New Century/Vista plans to release the film May 13, coincidentally the same date Paramount plans to unleash *FRIDAY THE 13TH—PART VII*.

Fun-loving vampire Louie (Jonathan Gries) turns wolfish to scale the wall to the apartment of the hero's girlfriend.



Helming the sequel is Tommy Lee Wallace who directed *HALLOWEEN III—SEASON OF THE WITCH* for John Carpenter. Wallace co-wrote the film with Tim Metcalfe and Miguel Tejada-Flores. Wallace's long-time association/friendship with Carpenter saw him serve as a literal jack-of-all-trades on many Carpenter productions—art director on *DARK STAR*, sound effects man on *ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13*, and second unit director on *BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA*.

Returning in the sequel are the two heroes of *FRIGHT NIGHT*, Roddy McDowall as The Great Vampire Killer, Peter Vincent, and his youthful aid, William Ragsdale as Charlie Brewster.

The formula is a familiar one. This time out a female vampire moves into town with an entourage of ghouls and an androgynous lover to help her seek out Peter Vincent and Charlie Brewster and avenge the death of her brother, Jerry Dandrige (the vampire played by Chris Sarandon in the first film). Traci Lin plays Charlie's new girlfriend. The trio are stalked relentlessly by a bevy of beasties. In one scene Vincent hangs from an exterior window ledge while a wisecracking werewolf (Jonathan Gries) descends from above to tease him with the "this little piggy" verse while detaching the vampire killer's fingers, one by one!

The formula of thrills laced with bits of humor is one that placed *FRIGHT NIGHT* in a



Roddy McDowall returns as B-film horror actor cum vampire killer Peter Vincent.

class of its own. Holland, who wrote as well as directed the original, was initially approached to direct the sequel. But Holland decided instead to undertake another project immediately following last summer's *FATAL BEAUTY*.

The waiting period in Hollywood can be frustrating to deal with. *FRIGHT NIGHT—PART 2* went the rounds from one studio to the next. Finally, Holland gave up waiting and

started on a script of his own tentatively titled *CHILDS-PLAY* which he is currently directing in Chicago with *FRIGHT NIGHT*'s Chris Sarandon and *STAR TREK IV*'s Catherine Hicks.

When asked about his non-involvement with *FRIGHT NIGHT—PART 2*, Holland said, "I was just too busy writing and preparing *CHILDS-PLAY* and had to commit to

*continued on page 57*

Julie Carmen plays Regine, sister of the original's vampire, who pays a visit to the sleeping Charlie Brewster (William Ragsdale) to avenge her brother's destruction.





## BOXOFFICE SURVEY: 1987 RECAP

An analysis of the 50 top-grossing films, as reported weekly by *Variety*, reveals that genre films accounted for 32.5% of all film earnings in 1987, a 4.2% increase over 1986 figures which reflected a substantial decline from tallies registered over the previous half-decade. Boxoffice in general increased 10.7% over 1986 totals.

Top-grossing genre films of 1987 in the *Variety* totals are listed at right. Titles are indicated as horror (h), fantasy (f), and science fiction (sf), followed by the number of weeks in 1987 that each title made it into the Top 50. Please note that the dollar amounts listed represent only a sample of a film's total earnings (averaging one-fourth of a film's domestic gross).

Of the 412 titles that comprised the weekly listings, 37 were fantasy films, accounting for 9% of the total and 10.3% of the receipts; 28 SF films, 6.8% of the total and 10.8% of the receipts; and 43 horror films, 10.4% of the total and 11.4% of receipts. Boxoffice generated by horror films in 1987 more than doubled that of 1986, leading horror to the top of the genre in terms of boxoffice take, and marking the first time since we began our boxoffice survey in 1981 that horror has outpaced both science fiction and fantasy.

In breakdown by distributor (below), Paramount (distributor of *FATAL ATTRACTION*, which ranked third among all films) grabbed the biggest portion of the genre's grosses—17.6%. □

### GENRE FILM REVENUE BY DISTRIBUTOR

Distributor	# of Films	Earnings	% of Total
Paramount (P)	3	\$55,097,933	17.6%
Warner Bros (WB)	6	\$44,791,083	14.3%
20th Century-Fox (FOX)	6	\$32,843,404	10.5%
Tri-Star (TST)	6	\$25,429,626	8.1%
Buena Vista (BV)	5	\$23,112,526	7.4%
Orion (O)	3	\$21,733,148	7.0%
New Line (NL)	5	\$17,579,980	5.7%
Universal (U)	6	\$16,646,311	5.3%
New World (NW)	6	\$14,794,357	4.7%
United Artists (UA)	2	\$14,100,318	4.5%
MGM (M)	1	\$10,915,984	3.5%
New Century/Vista (NCV)	4	\$ 7,590,311	2.4%
Cannon (CAN)	4	\$ 6,175,681	2.0%
DeLaurentis Ent. (DEG)	5	\$ 4,173,948	1.3%
All Others	46	\$15,723,232	5.0%

• Indicates a film originally released before 1987

### TOP TEN MONEY MAKERS

FATAL ATTRACTION (P, h, 15)	\$37,367,051
THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK (WB, f, 14)	\$18,501,449
ROBOCOP (O, sf, 14)	\$15,536,435
THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS (UA, sf, 10)	\$14,067,724
PREDATOR (FOX, sf, 10)	\$13,042,736
NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 3—DREAM WARRIORS (NL, h, 13)	\$12,859,310
SPACEBALLS (M, sf, 9)	\$10,915,984
THE RUNNING MAN (TST, sf, 7)	\$ 9,936,748
• STAR TREK IV: THE VOYAGE HOME (P, sf, 5)	\$ 8,885,275
• THE GOLDEN CHILD (P, f, 11)	\$ 8,845,607

### OTHER TOP EARNERS

THE LOST BOYS (WB, h, 11)	\$8,416,218
THE PRINCESS BRIDE (FOX, f, 14)	\$8,337,841
• SNOW WHITE & THE SEVEN DWARFS (BV, f, 10)	\$7,583,984
LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS (WB, f, 12)	\$7,355,416
LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON (TST, f, 8)	\$7,141,165
MANNEQUIN (Fox, f, 11)	\$6,843,404
ANGEL HEART (TST, h, 15)	\$6,700,219
INNERSPACE (WB, sf, 10)	\$6,573,948
• CINDERELLA (BV, f, 6)	\$6,229,617
THE BELIEVERS (O, h, 7)	\$5,448,054
JAWS 4—THE REVENGE (U, h, 5)	\$4,938,834
MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE (CAN, sf, 7)	\$4,739,914
PROJECT X (FOX, sf, 10)	\$4,620,300
HELLO AGAIN (BV, f, 6)	\$4,558,385
CREEPSHOW 2 (NW, h, 8)	\$4,381,988
HELLRAISER (NW, h, 9)	\$3,995,460
HARRY & THE HENDERSONS (U, f, 10)	\$3,958,390
FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC (NW, h, 6)	\$3,941,713
SUPERMAN 4—THE QUEST FOR PEACE (WB, sf, 5)	\$3,925,552
THE GATE (NCV, h, 7)	\$3,899,943
PRINCE OF DARKNESS (U, h, 5)	\$3,610,210
THE HIDDEN (NL, sf, 8)	\$3,603,293
• LADY & THE TRAMP (BV, f, 7)	\$2,791,722
BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED (U, sf, 2)	\$2,498,092
MAID TO ORDER (NCV, f, 8)	\$2,433,505
HOUSE II: THE SECOND STORY (NW, h, 4)	\$2,040,830
• THE ARISTOCATS (BV, f, 8)	\$1,948,818
TEEN WOLF TOO (ATL, f, 4)	\$1,810,949
THE CHIPMUNK ADVENTURE (GWN, f, 6)	\$1,715,013
EVIL DEAD 2—DEAD BY DAWN (DEG, h, 11)	\$1,652,747
WITCHBOARD (CMG, h, y)	\$1,547,360
THE KINDRED (FME, sf, 7)	\$1,441,432
• AN AMERICAN TAIL (U, f, 12)	\$1,382,913
NEAR DARK (DEG, h, 4)	\$1,163,601
MY DEMON LOVER (NL, h, 4)	\$1,068,327

## THE LADY IN WHITE

*A supernatural ghost story from Frank LaLoggia, director of FEAR NO EVIL.*

By Steven Jongeward

Rochester, New York filmmaker Frank LaLoggia made an impressive directorial debut seven years ago with *FEAR NO EVIL* (10:3:14, 11:1:47), which was independently financed and picked-up for completion and release by Avco-Embassy. Now LaLoggia's second feature, *THE LADY IN WHITE*, a supernatural ghost story, is scheduled for release by New Century/Vista for April 22.

Why has it taken LaLoggia so long to reach the screen again? "I didn't want to lose control over the picture," said LaLoggia. "I wanted to see it through from beginning to end this time. The last picture I did, *FEAR NO EVIL*, Avco-Embassy took away from me and made a shambles of it. That was a nightmare! To keep control LaLoggia made *THE LADY IN WHITE* for his own company, New Sky Communications, a co-venture with his cousin Charley LaLoggia, raising the \$5 million budget via public stock offerings. The company also has investments in thoroughbred race horses and cable TV.

*THE LADY IN WHITE* stars Lukas (WITNESS, *SOLARBA-BIES*) Haas as a 9-year-old who (while locked inside his classroom closet on Halloween night) has a terrifying experience. "Lukas plays Frankie," said LaLoggia, "and he gets involved in a murder mystery involving the ghost of a little girl and an enigmatic *LADY IN WHITE* who haunts this small town. It is set in 1961 and the film is

LaLoggia, writer, producer, director, and composer of the film's score.



Katherine Helmond plays the enigmatic character who haunts a small town; an April 22, New Century/Vista release.

told by a grown-up Frankie with narrative flashbacks. It worked in *STAND BY ME* and I think it works here." LaLoggia shot the film in Lyons, a small town near Rochester, which kept costs down.

The film is filled with traces of LaLoggia's own family background and tradition—heavily Italian-American. "What I did was make a very personal film with what is, I hope a mix of chills and wonderment," said LaLoggia. Working outside of the Hollywood/studio system has permitted LaLoggia the freedom to personalize without sacrificing "roller-coaster" excitement. "The distributors would have much preferred a 'Freddy' movie," LaLoggia said, referring to the ghoul of the Elm Street series. "That kind of film is much easier to deal with."

The film has a full slate of makeup and visual effects shots supervised by Gene Warren, Jr., of *Fantasy II*. *LADY IN WHITE* also stars Katherine Helmond (*BRAZIL*), noted Broadway actor Len Cariou, Jason Presson, and Alex Rocco. LaLoggia, who began his career in filmmaking as an actor, also composed the score, on top of writing, producing, and directing the film. □





# NOT OF THIS EARTH

Porno star Traci Lords in a reread of Roger Corman's '57 B-film.

By Eric Gilmartin

Alien beings, fleeing the radioactive post-nuclear hell of their home planet, have invaded Venice, California, the shooting site for Roger Corman's 1987 remake of his science-fiction *film noir* NOT OF THIS EARTH. Production commenced in November 1987 on what Corman considers an impossibly slim shooting schedule—just twelve days. Ironically, it was in just that brief number of days that Corman produced and directed the 1957 edition, which starred Beverly Garland and a host of extraterrestrial nasties seeking isotopically pure human blood.

Director Jim Wynorski, whose prior Corman production credits include DEATHSTALKER 2, FORBIDDEN WORLD, SORCERESS and CHOPPING MALL, took the helm on the remake due to Corman's friendly challenge that he could not duplicate the original production's swiftness to completion. Wynorski termed the friendly bet a "gentleman's agreement" and seemed poised to emerge victorious as he neared his final and twelfth day of shooting. "We're on schedule and moving fast and furious," he said.

Corman secured considerable publicity value for his New Horizons production by casting former



Jim Wynorski directs former porn star Traci Lords in a remake of Roger Corman's NOT OF THIS EARTH.

The ad art for Corman's '57 low-budgeter which starred G-rated Beverly Garland in the role now played by Lords.



X-rated superstar Traci Lords in the role originally played by Garland. Hiring a young woman fresh from the adult movie scene to follow in the G-rated footsteps of Garland, who (lest we forget) married Fred MacMurray on MY THREE SONS, would appear to be a risky strategy—for anybody else. Wynorski contacted young Lords through mutual acquaintances, auditioned her, and was impressed enough to cast her one week later. "She's doing an absolutely terrific job," he said. Adding to the production's considerable pulchritude is former Penthouse centerfold and DEATHSTALKER 2 co-star Monique Gabrielle, who makes her initial appearance on the scene barely sheathed in an almost microscopic black dress that could have been sprayed on with an aerosol can.

But why do a remake of an old B-picture? Wynorski cited the science fiction films of the 50's, such as FORBIDDEN PLANET (which he deemed "the STAR WARS of its era") as being among the best that have ever been made. He had great affection for Corman's original NOT OF THIS EARTH, having been properly scared upon first viewing it at the age of four. Besides, the script was available. Wynorski pitched the

idea to Corman after acquiring a copy of the original film's screenplay from a friend. The original script by Charles Griffith (who penned Corman's shot-in-three-days LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS) and Mark Hannah has, under Wynorski's supervision, been revised to a contemporary urban setting. In addition, its humorous content is now decidedly intentional, giving it a "spoofy sendup" quality. At the same time, Wynorski sought to preserve the original's fear-drenched *mise en scene*.

The pressure of cramming a full-length feature film into twelve shooting days makes its presence known on the set. Wynorski has to bark unprintable reprimands to a stage crew working off-camera while shooting a laboratory scene; they are making a cantankerous din which is blotting out the sound recording. The director is, in turn, mildly upbraided by his own script supervisor, who barks at him, "Let me worry about the scene numbers," in response to an innocent inquiry between takes. Then, too, there is the unique conflict which is produced by having the film's producer, Murray Miller, double as Wynorski's first assistant.

Despite these aggravations, it is clear that Wynorski, Miller, Lords and the cast and crew are having considerable fun remaking NOT OF THIS EARTH. On a restaurant set Lords drinks colored tea rather than the champagne indicated by the script. Her pleas for the genuine article fall on goodnaturedly deaf ears. Lords defies pre-conceptions. Her sweetness and self-deprecating good humor, not to mention her considerable beauty, combine to offset expectations that she would prove to be an emotionally bruised, hard-shelled pornography survivor.

On this set, the threat, "You'll never work in this town again," is an acknowledged joke, as is the constant ribbing actor Roger Alan Lodge is given for showing up late for work in his role as Lords' policeman boyfriend. Asked producer Murray Miller rhetorically, "Is this fun, or what?" □

## IN A SHALLOW GRAVE

MICHAEL BIEHN STARS AS DISFIGURED WORLD WAR II VET

"If you stuck THE ELEPHANT MAN in the midst of BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, you'd get some idea of the sort of movie this is turning out to be," enthused writer-director Ken Bowser about IN A SHALLOW GRAVE, his feature film debut. "It's really about someone who learns to care about himself, who learns that he has some value in life." Skouras Pictures plans to open the film regionally in key markets May 6.

Michael Biehn, featured in James Cameron's THE TERMINATOR and ALIENS, plays the lead, a horribly burned and disfigured World



Michael Biehn in makeup by Oscar-winner Michele Burke.

War II veteran. Biehn returns to his farm in Virginia and attempts to pick-up again on his pre-war romance with a beautiful girl, using a handsome young intermediary to deliver his messages.

Since Bowser's script, based on the novel by James Purdy, doesn't feature zombies, vampires, or other denizens of the nether world, the title could mislead genre fans. "What it does offer," noted makeup artist Michele Burke, "is the unusual." Burke's superb work, seen in CLAN OF THE CAVE BEAR and QUEST FOR FIRE (for which she received an Oscar) is prominently displayed in the film, which Bowser and his wife, executive producer Marilyn G. Haft, nursed for five years to reach the screen.

Randy Palmer



# George Romero

## Monkeying With Horror

The auteur of the living dead on forthcoming pet projects.

By Frederick C. Szebin

No one is openly willing to call George Romero's latest film *MONKEY SHINES* a horror movie. "It's more of a thriller," said star Jason Beghe. "It's about a love bond that becomes very distorted."

Romero, known for his ghastly images of blasted bodies and disembowlings, doesn't refer to it as a horror film either. "I'm hoping the last half hour will be pretty intense," he said. "But it's not bloody." Though the makeup master of grue, Tom Savini, is working on the film, Romero said there's hardly enough to keep Savini busy.

*MONKEY SHINES*, a \$6 million production which Orion plans to release this summer, is Romero's first film in two years, since *DAY OF THE DEAD* completed the Pittsburgh-based filmmaker's highly-touted and controversial zombie trilogy. *MONKEY SHINES* is based on a novel by Michael Stewart and stars Beghe as a quadriplegic with an experimental, specially trained, genetically altered Capu-

chin monkey helpmate. After Beghe develops a psychic bond with the animal, those who frustrate or hurt the invalid begin to turn up dead under mysterious circumstances. The idea of placing a Capuchin monkey, the pet of old-time streetcorner organ grinders, with a quadriplegic may seem outrageous at first, but the Boston-based project, *Helping Hands*, has been doing just that for several years.

Romero's name has been associated with a number of genre projects since he severed his working relationship with Laurel Entertainment after *DAY OF THE DEAD*. (Romero retains co-ownership with former partner Richard Rubinstein). Romero's new-found free agent status brought several projects his way, including *TURN OF THE SCREW* for Columbia, an adaptation of Richard Bachman's *THE LONG WALK*, and remakes of perennial classics *THE MUMMY* and *WAR OF THE WORLDS*, (for Universal and Paramount respectively). Most of the projects remain in development, but Romero's *WAR OF THE WORLDS* feature, which he was set to direct, seems still-born with the announcement by Paramount of plans for a syndicated TV series in the mold of *STAR TREK—THE NEXT GENERATION*, geared for a fall 1988 air date.

In the midst of his busy writing schedule, *MONKEY SHINES* offered Romero an almost immediate production opportunity for his Florida-based Sanabel Films company. The film's 14-week shooting schedule was spent in Pittsburgh and at Romero's Coraopolis studio, with additional exteriors lensed in Carnegie. Like most of Romero's previous work, the film features a talented, but primarily unknown cast, including Jason (1ST AND 10) Beghe, John (TO LIVE AND DIE IN L.A.) Pankow, Kate (NORTH AND SOUTH: BOOK II) McNeil, and veteran actress Joyce Van Patten. Also, Romero's wife Chris follows her appearances in *DAWN OF THE DEAD*, *KNIGHTRIDERS* and *CREEPSHOW* with a featured role as Beghe's nurse.



Romero goes over the script with Ella, his star in *MONKEY SHINES*, to be released by Orion Pictures.

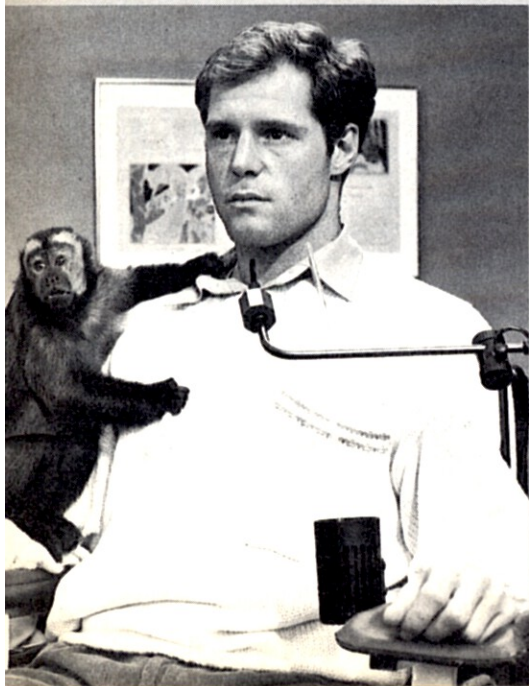
With *MONKEY SHINES* awaiting release, it may seem like an opportune time for Romero to commence the oft-announced but never instigated lensing of two of Stephen King's still-unfilmed works, *PET SEMETARY* and *THE STAND*. Despite completed scripts and a yearning on Romero's part, neither novel has received the cinematic treatment for a very simple reason. "Both projects are still at Laurel and I have first refusal to direct both of them," he said. "There's been a completed script for *THE STAND* for over two years which Steve [King] and I worked on a little together, but it's his script all the way. Unfortunately, there was a rash of Stephen King films that did not sell a lot of tickets at the boxoffice.

"*THE STAND* was always huge and very expensive, at least \$20 million," Romero continued. "Had a couple of the movies based on Steve's books gone through the roof, I think we could have financed it in a minute. It's no fault of the material, even though I didn't think all the films were very good. It's just circumstance. And I'm dying to film *PET SEMETARY*, but Laurel hasn't been able to get a deal structured. I even did storyboards and was ready to go. There was a deal set up, but it just fell apart at the last minute."

One film that Romero has never planned to make is the persistently rumored fourth chapter in his zombie series, *TWILIGHT OF THE DEAD*. This pseudo-project was supposed to allow him to make the film that *DAY OF THE*

continued on page 55

In *MONKEY SHINES*, Romero's summer release, Jason Beghe plays a quadriplegic whose psychic bond with his Capuchin monkey helpmate leads to terror.





## BAD DREAMS

Low priced horror, produced by Gale Anne Hurd (Mrs. James Cameron).

By Frederick S. Clarke

Though 20th Century-Fox launched BAD DREAMS March 25th with an expensive national release, the film was produced independently for the studio, on a shoestring by TERMINATOR producer Gale Anne Hurd, wife of director James Cameron. Just how cheap was it? Hurd's No Frills Films company told the *L.A. Times* they were in business to make movies for "under \$6 million." Apparently it wasn't enough to hire a publicist, according to Martha Cotten of Charisma Public Relations, who said the firm was donating their services to tub thump the filming as a favor.

BAD DREAMS is a cover version of Wes Craven's Elm Street series without the expensive, elaborate effects, starring Jennifer Rubin, one of the dreamers in A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 3. The film was written by its first-time director Andrew Fleming, an NYU film school grad who submitted the script to Hurd on spec. Her company said it considers about 50 new scripts per week.

Hurd's other project at Fox can afford a few frills, however. OUTER HEAT, costing a reported \$16.7 million, is due in August, written by former TWILIGHT ZONE scripter Rockne S. O'Bannon. It's about immigrant aliens from space in a near-future L.A. James Caan plays a cop partnered with one of the aliens, played by THE PRINCESS BRIDE's Mandy Patinkin. □

Jennifer Rubin: what, no frills!



## THE SCORE / Christopher Young on HELLRAISER

By Randall D. Larson

A film about weird, torture-beings from other dimensions and a man who, having been torn to pieces by them, manages to reassemble himself, bit by coagulating bit, through the blood of others to rejoin his illicit lover, is certainly a strikingly unusual idea for a horror film. In the hands of less capable filmmakers a movie like this could have easily become silly and ludicrous. But in the hands of reputable horror author and first-time director Clive Barker and his crew, HELLRAISER succeeded as a unique and fresh film of dark horror and obsessed characterization. Especially notable is the musical score by Christopher Young, a composer who has risen to high ranks in genre film scoring in only seven years.

Young began his career in music as a jazz percussionist in the early 1970s, eventually gaining an interest in composing as a means of overcoming the confinement of strictly percussive musical ideas. In 1976 he encountered the London Phase-4 record album, *Fantasy Film Scores of Bernard Herrmann* which included music from the score of A JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH, a book the teen-aged Young happened to be re-reading at the time. Herrmann's music had a profound effect on Young, enlightening him to a whole new world of musical expression. "I remember hearing that music and saying to myself, 'God, this guy's doing exactly what I want to be doing as a writer,'" Young said. "It was through that somewhat round-about way that I made the association with what I was hearing and its application to film."

After studying jazz and "serious" music at North Texas State University, at Berkeley, and at Manhattan School of Music, Young moved to Los Angeles and studied with respected film composer David Raksin at UCLA. While there, Young also began to score for student films, including a horror feature



Film composer Christopher Young.

entitled PRANKS. That film was a project by a young filmmaker named Jeff Obrow, which was later picked up for release on home video as THE DORM THAT DRIPPED BLOOD.

Young's percussive score for PRANKS, while now something he looks back on with disdain got him his start as a film composer. He scored Obrow's next film, THE POWER, with a strong and Herrmannesque orchestral composition. After scoring or re-scoring a slew of low-budget action films for New World Pictures (many of which were re-used sans credit), Young's score for the post-apocalypse fantasy, DEF-CON 4, brought him to the attention of director Jack Sholder who hired him to score NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET II.

Young had actually sought to score the first NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET but was passed over in favor of Charles Bernstein. When the sequel came into being, with a different director, Young again submitted material and Sholder hired him for the job. "NIGHTMARE II was a situation where I feel that I tried to do too much for too little money," said Young. "The budget I had for that film was less than what I had for DEF-CON 4, even though it was a much bigger picture." Young was forced to compose the entire film in little more

than two weeks and record it with a small orchestra whose performance was less than wholly satisfactory to him.

While Charles Bernstein had provided an electronic score for the first NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, the producers of NIGHTMARE II were specific in asking Young not to write a similar score, so he took a primarily orchestral approach (the producers of NIGHTMARE III, on the other hand, loved Bernstein's electronic approach to the first film and requested composer Angelo Badalamenti take on a similar approach for his score on that third movie). "The primary motive behind what I did," Young said of his work on NIGHTMARE II, "was to write music that would provide some shrieks at moments where the shrieks were missing, or to provide an atmosphere at moments where the atmosphere might not have been as convincing as they had intended."

Following NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET II, Young was hired to write the music for Tobe Hooper's ambitious remake of INVADERS FROM MARS. While initially seeming to be quite a lucrative assignment, the job actually turned out to be an unfortunate experience which found most of Young's score thrown out and replaced with a new one by neophyte film composer David Storrs.

"The problem with INVADERS FROM MARS," said Young, "was a confusion about who I was responsible to. I was called in at the very last minute and I had a semi-spotting session with director Tobe Hooper." Young and Hooper went over only the film's first few reels, deciding where music was to appear, and that was their one and only meeting. "After that Hooper disappeared. He had to go off and start shooting TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE II, and I never had any dialogues with him. He had told me in so many words that 'there's so little time on this project, you do what

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# THE UNHOLY

## Vestron hired makeup artist Bob Keen to pep up their tale of priestly demonic possession.

By Steve Biodrowski

Ben Cross, Hal Holbrook, Ned Beatty, and Trevor Howard headline the cast of *THE UNHOLY*, a supernatural thriller about a young priest who, after surviving a 17-story fall, is appointed pastor of a church which has been closed for three years following the mysterious, violent deaths of his two predecessors.

Originally scheduled for a release May 13 by Vestron, the opening was moved up to April so as not to compete with two high powered horror film sequels, *FRIGHT NIGHT—PART II* and Paramount's *FRIDAY THE 13TH—PART VII*. The \$7 million production marks the directorial debut of Camilo Vila, and was produced by Mathew Hayden for Team Effort Productions. The film was shot mostly in Florida, with some location work in New Orleans and additional post-production effects in Los Angeles.

When the film was delivered to Vestron in December, 1986, the distributor was disappointed with the ending and decided to put up additional money for re-shooting. Bob Keen, who was shooting 2nd unit effects on another Vestron picture, *WAXWORK*, was asked to have a look at the film and make suggestions for improvements. Vestron liked Keen's ideas and asked him to direct the new footage. Keen re-wrote and storyboarded the new ending, then used his 2nd unit crew from *WAXWORK* to film the new footage, bringing back three of the principal actors and recreating a church set originally built in Florida.

The general consensus seems to be that the original ending was too weak because the filmmakers were so concerned with



In the new ending, parish priest Ben Cross fights off the minions of a demon from hell that seek to possess his soul. Vestron plans to open the film on April 22.

making a high-class film that they neglected to provide the necessary shocks and thrills a genre film demands. According to a source on Keen's crew, "It all built up to the ending, which was laughable. The priest stands in the spotlight, says the magic words, and this creature falls over backwards and dies. The creature's one of the worst things I've ever seen designed, with glowing red eyes but no capability of movement."

The effects for the original ending were provided by John Dykstra, who used miniatures and opticals to show the floor of the church open up as the demon rises from Hell. Keen said the quality of the optical and miniature work was excellent, but the creature design and the brevity of the scene were disappointing. "We used about four shots of the floor collapsing in the church," said Keen. "The rest we managed to

generate in two weeks' shooting.

Ben Cross, who returned for four days of additional shooting, said, "It's not so much that they changed the ending—the ending is virtually identical—it's just that the whole film built toward a climax and it wasn't strong enough."

Cross plays Father Michael, who is gifted—although he neither knows nor believes it—with the will to overcome evil in its bestial form. Explaining his decision to appear in his first horror film, Cross said, "It's a cliched answer, but I was really attracted to the character. He's a kind of upright, moral character. I tend to get cast in that, but the genre was sufficiently different to interest me, because it's always hard persuading people you can do other things than the mold they see you in.

"I have to add that films of this genre come low on my list, although I catch up with them eventually," continued Cross.

"I like *THE OMEN* and *THE EXORCIST*. I actually was rather taken by *A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET*. I don't know why—perhaps this means I'm a kind of sicko. *THE EXORCIST* explored the character of the exorcist himself. In that way, this is similar; this is a character study of Father Michael."

Like Father Karras in *THE EXORCIST*, Father Michael has his own inner demons which plague him: temptations of the flesh. "The demon's Latin name is Desidarius—which is demon of desire," said Cross, who hopes this character approach, coupled with the strong cast, will appeal to a broader audience than the hard-core horror crowd.

Bob Keen's new footage features mechanical effects, makeup, and prosthetics filmed live on the set with the actors. "Interfacing it with the original film, luckily we had a series of dreams," said Keen. "We've generated new material for those. We can lay down the foundations for the end of the story, so the new ending doesn't jar the audience like it's just tacked on."

Although Keen had only two months to come up with the new sequence, he is very pleased with the results. "It's very scary now," he said. "We've done things which will turn a few heads away from the screen. We've given it more conflict: there is a battle; there is serious doubt whether the priest can win. The creature keeps trying to take the priest to Hell. Just when you think you've seen it all, there's another thing—and another. Vestron spent a lot of money to make it right. They're re-doing the music; they're re-editing. I've seen some of our stuff edited in, and it works." □



# HR GIGER

## The surrealist who shaped the look of genre film design, on his art and his imitators.

By Jan Doense &  
Les Paul Robley

Even the pictures illustrate only one or two phases of its endless variety, preternatural massiveness, and utterly alien exoticism... There was something vaguely but deeply unhuman in all the contours, dimensions, proportions, decorations, and constructional nuances of the blasphemously archaic stonework...

H. P. Lovecraft

Giger's work disturbs us, spooks us, because of its enormous evolutionary time-span. It shows us, all too clearly, where we come from and where we are going.

Timothy Leary

Swiss surrealist H. R. Giger's design work for *ALIEN* revolutionized the look of science fiction films, and is often imitated. Surprisingly, the artist has not been asked to work on either sequel.

Giger lives near Zurich airport in a nondescript two-story flat. Giger is nothing like you expect. The meek, cherub-faced artist who comes to the door seemed at odds with the horrors he paints for a living. He prefaces our interview by conducting a grand tour of his home as if I am the first to view its strange, yet beautiful, one-of-a-kind furnishings. Upstairs a dinette set is surrounded by biomechanical *ALIEN*-styled chairs. A unique glass coffee table is held up by six crucified Christ figures, three right-side up, and three upside-down, representing the holy and infernal trinitities. A deformed Swiss camera housing mutates into a nightmarish metallic cyclops.

All around the house are hung huge panoramic gray-



Giger in the dining room of his Zurich home with his pet Siamese cat, Muggi, surrounded by one of his large paintings which he refers to as "environments." The chair is Giger's "Harkonnen" design, inspired by Frank Herbert's "Dune."

black triptyches of famous works from Giger's *Necronomicon*, a book of early drawings whose title is derived from Lovecraft, which later served as the inspiration for the creature in *ALIEN*. Sleek, beautiful women with upturned eyes and a deathlike pallor look out from the artwork, steely serpents grow into phalluses, diseased ribs and vertebrae. Like works in his gallery, Giger's two Siamese cats, Muggi (meaning "little mosquito") and Noneli, pose like Egyptian statues. He often uses them as models for his paintings. Muggi still bears the stitches on its forehead from three recent brain operations.

Giger's abortive contribution to MGM's *POLTERGEIST II* has soured the artist on working for Hollywood, which commonly borrows from his work without asking. Giger is more flattered than outraged by his movie imitators, but still yearns to exert the kind of creative control over a film project that he enjoys in the creation of his paintings. To get that control Giger has gone the independent route to work on *THE MIRROR* (see separate story, page 32), a film that promises to translate the nightmare imagery of his *Necronomicon* paintings to the screen.

*Which of your paintings are they using for THE MIRROR?*

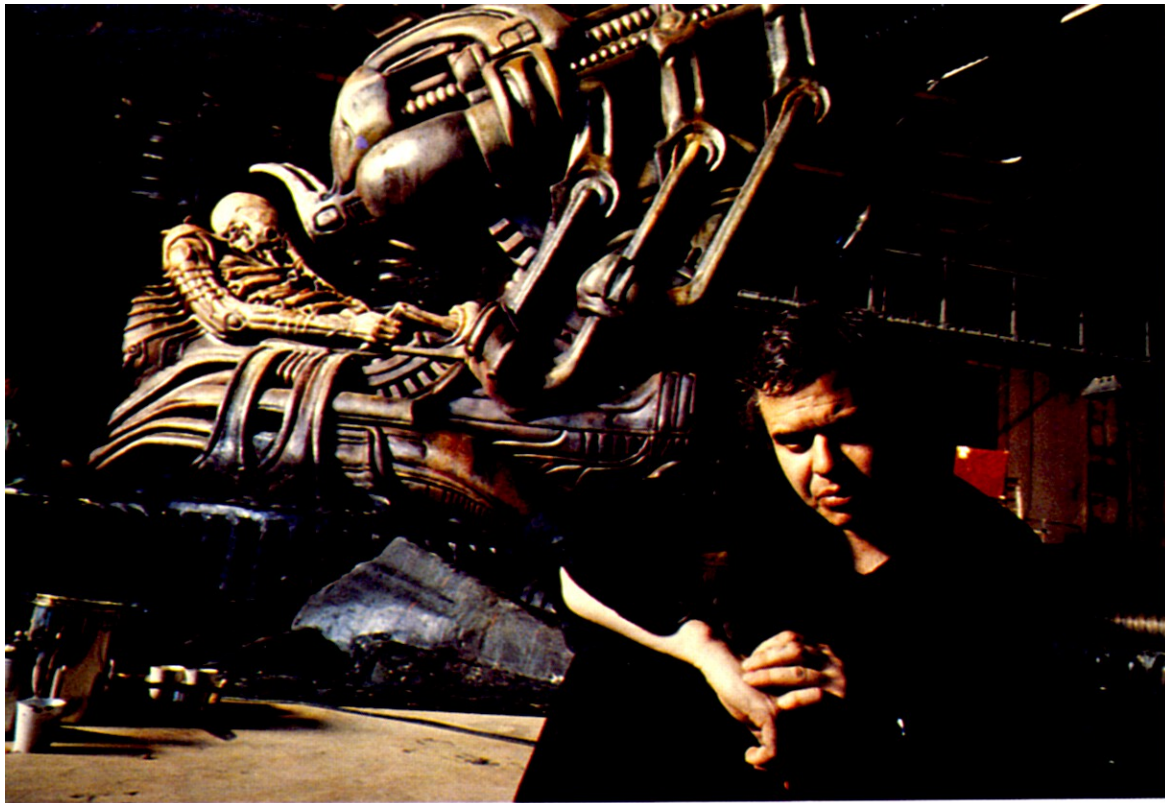
They are using some of my best paintings for the film. You will see them through the mirror in 3-dimensional form. One of them, "The Spell," I began in 1972 and finished in '76. I've done about three or four of these





**THE MIRROR**, a film by director Bill Malone, will visualize Giger's world in three dimensions using paintings like this one from the artist's famed *Necronomicon*, a book of Giger's early work which inspired the design look of *ALIEN*. The work is *Li II*, a 1974 acrylic painting 4.5'x6', a portrait of the artist's actress lover Li Tobler, who died by her own hand in 1975.





Giger poses with his handiwork from *ALIEN* (1979), on the set at England's Pinewood studios. A meticulous perfectionist, Giger worked with studio craftsmen in the sculpting, casting, construction, painting and final detailing of his designs for the film.

large works, which I call environments. They are all about 420 cm long and 240 cm high [approx. 14'x8']. I make them in three pieces so I can get them out of the house. [Giger also uses a dumbwaiter system to move the artwork while he paints, a method borrowed from Salvador Dali.]

*Will you actually work on the set for THE MIRROR?*

I will not have much to do on the film. For me it's best when someone takes my images and brings them to life and I don't have to invent another thing. I hope to control everything. Otherwise, it never ends up looking like my stuff. It always looks influenced by the artist who is doing it. The problem is to find

someone who can make my stuff look exactly like it is. I would prefer to use the man who modeled my home furnishings, Cornelius de Fries. He is the best for me because he knows my work.

*Will you work on THE MIRROR yourself and sculpt as you did on ALIEN?*

No, I don't think so. Just oversee. I want to be very much involved in the film because I have never been satisfied with what filmmakers have done with my work in the past. I was horrified about *POLTERGEIST II*. That was probably my mistake for not being there. This time, if they want to transform my images they can't change a lot. But it's difficult to see how

my paintings look from the side. I will provide advice and make sketches to show how they look dimensionally.

*What did you think of the changes made in the design of your creature in ALIENS?*

I thought the mechanization was done very well. I was a little depressed because nobody asked me to work on this film. I was in Los Angeles at the time working on *POLTERGEIST II*, and I asked around about *ALIENS*. For me it would have been the most logical thing to work on that film. I was very anxious to collaborate but nobody called me. I'd much rather have done a second *ALIEN* than a second *POLTERGEIST* because nat-

urally I felt more related to *ALIEN*. Perhaps the *POLTERGEIST II* people wanted to keep me away from *ALIENS* for fear of losing me. I inquired everywhere but no one could or would inform me about it.

*You received compensation, though...*

No! Nothing. They put my name in the credits as designer of the original alien concept, but I never got any money. In my contract, Fox can make as many films as they want. It's always the company's rights, and they do what they want.

*Did you like ALIENS?*

Actually, I expected more after all the enthusiastic reviews. It's a bit too American for me—too much action. I prefer suspense. Half of the action in *ALIENS* would have been sufficient for one film, I think. Far too much is happening. It's a bit like *RAMBO*.

*What about the film's art direction, especially the design of the Alien Queen?*

It's all beautifully done, everything, the designs and the way they're executed. I'm particularly fond of the robot, which is operated by Ripley—*Das war ganz toll, nicht?*—that yellow monster with those pincers. The Alien Queen is also nice. She's a bit smaller in the face than my alien but my basic design was very well studied. She was frighteningly well animated. Of course in that respect a lot has been learned in the past eight years. The face-huggers were well done, too. As far as the designs are concerned I've no criticism, only the film's pace bothers me. And I believe a lot of Europeans react like that. They would

## HOLLYWOOD RIPS-OFF H. R. GIGER

Since *ALIEN* burst onto the consciousness of Hollywood in 1979, the distinctive biomechanical style of designer H. R. Giger has cropped up in numerous films from some of the biggest names in the genre, like James Cameron, David Cronenberg, Rick Baker, Stan Winston, et al. Here's a list in no particular order and by no means complete:



Oscar-winner Chris Walas did *GALAXINA*'s chestbuster.

**GALAXINA** (1980). This Crown release, written and directed by William Sachs and starring the late Dorothy Stratten as the titular android, featured a spoof of *ALIEN*'s chest-bursting scene. The little alien (left) was designed by Chris Walas, a later Oscar-winner for *THE FLY*, now turned director.

**ALIENS** (1986). Writer/director James Cameron's continuation of the film that started it all. Stan Winston picked-up an Oscar for his work, based



Stan Winston got an Oscar for copying Giger's designs for *ALIENS*.



# GIGER

## SLIMING TECHNOLOGY

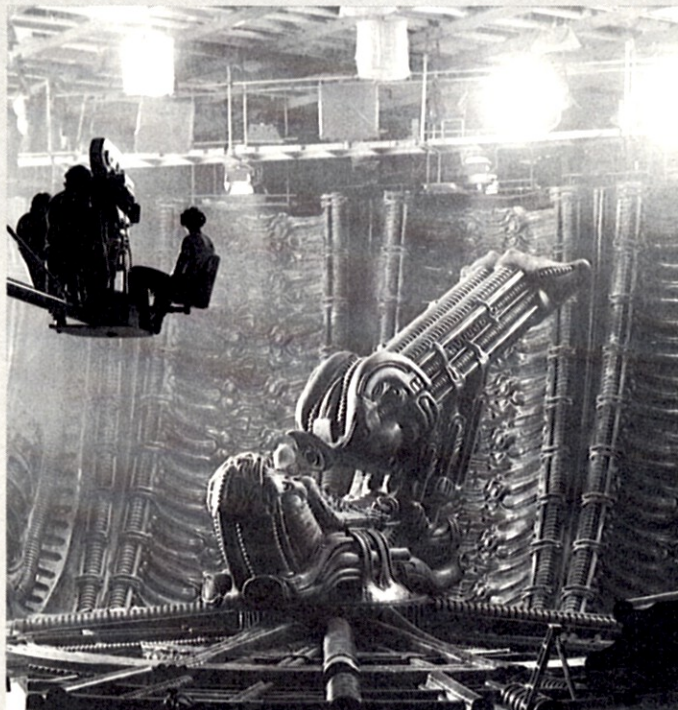
*Giger's surreal vision of the future profoundly touched something in us, remapping our sense of what is "the other."*

By Brooks Landon

H. R. Giger has proven to be one of those rare talents who can turn a film genre in a new direction. It may be too soon to say that after Giger science fiction film will never be the same again, but it certainly hasn't been the same since that moment in 1979 when those grumbling explorers from the *Nostromo* made their way through vaginal portals into the vast ribcage cathedral of the Giger-designed spaceship of *ALIEN*.

Centered in its interior the explorers saw the body of a huge fossilized extraterrestrial. Reclining at some unfathomable gun or instrument mount—its bones, muscles, and tendons indistinguishable from the mount's tubes, cables and conduit—the giant dead astronaut seemed to grow out of and flow into the chair, just as the gun or instrument emplacement seemed to grow out of the ship itself, its organic nature more clear than its technological purpose. From that literally awe-inspiring moment on, *ALIEN* was Giger's film, and from that film on, the Giger "biomechanoid" look, at once terrifying and erotic, has been omnipresent in science fiction film.

Sure, Giger had some help from director Ridley Scott, effects expert Carlo Rambaldi, production designer Michael Seymour and others; *ALIEN*, like any major film production, was a supremely collaborative effort. For science fiction and fantasy films this collaboration grows ever more complicated and reciprocal since special effects and production design often determine the look and feel of a film as much or more than does its script, acting, directing and camera work. So claims about influence, inspiration and derivation within and among



Filming Giger's "Space Jockey" design for *ALIEN*, a turning point in the look of science fiction. Right: Giger's "Alien" design for the film, a six-foot replica that glares out at visitors to the artist's Zurich gallery/apartment/workshop.

science fiction and fantasy films tend to be more subjective than authoritative, a process more of visual matching than of determining degrees of indebtedness. What one critic calls a rip-off, another may see as *hommage*, while a third may talk of "convergence." Still, who can doubt that Giger's surreal vision of the future profoundly touched something in us, remapping our sense of "the other," the alien, while resurrecting dance of death skeletal iconography to haunt us with our own mortality. "Everything I designed in the film," revealed Giger, "used the idea of bones."

Certainly, Giger's art played an instrumental role in Ridley Scott's approach to *ALIEN*. Scott has said of his first look at

Giger's artwork, "I've never really been so shook up about anything," adding that he instantly recognized it as the basis of the creature for his film. Similarly, explaining what drew her to the role of Ripley, Sigourney Weaver said the clincher was seeing Giger's designs for the film. From the outset, it was Giger's unique vision, a blend of nightmare-surrealism with industrial design, that seemed to lift *ALIEN* out of the conventional, his designs shaping and challenging its production values. One major difference between SF literature and SF film is that the latter may be image-driven, built from a visual paradigm or central image rather than from a narrative or conceptual design, and *ALIEN* provides a perfect example of an

image-driven film.

Of course, following *ALIEN*'s huge box office success, a number of films, most of them awful, attempted to copy its format, either in whole or in part. A Roger Corman production, *GALAXY OF TERROR* (1981), probably came closest to matching Giger's biotechnological terror (to be imitated by Roger Corman must be a singular kind of validation), while the imploding chest scene in John Carpenter's





THE THING (1982) was clearly the most original response to the "chestbursting" stage of Giger's alien. A list of ALIEN/Giger inspired or influenced SF creatures in recent films (see page 26) would include those in ALIEN CONTAMINATION, XTRO, CAPTAIN EO, CREATURE, HORROR PLANET, FORBIDDEN WORLD, and SCARED TO DEATH, but to note the many inferior attempts to mimic Giger actually misrepresents his larger impact on SF film.

Giger's real accomplishment is more abstract and has to do with reorienting our notion of the alien from the creature to its ecology and environment, and with making us rethink the look of technology. If, as film scholar Vivian Sobchack (*Screening Space*) argues, the last ten years have seen a fundamental paradigm shift in science fiction film, one radically revising long-held assumptions about the nature of space and time and the depiction of the alien, then Giger must be acknowledged as one of the primary architects of that shift.

Although ALIEN was an old-style monster-from-deep-space film, its rudimentary plot a kind of spaceship-gothic more than anything new to think about, its imagery challenged us to see in a completely new way the spaces in outer space. That is, it immersed us in a *systematically* alien environment, an entire implicit ecology, confronting us with a spaceship at once so vast and so strange looking that it subverted our comfortable distinctions between biology and machinery, our expectations of mechanical forms with implicitly clear functions, and with a creature that threatened us from without and from within.

**“To note the many inferior attempts to mimic Giger actually misrepresents his larger impact on SF film. Giger made us rethink the look of technology.”**

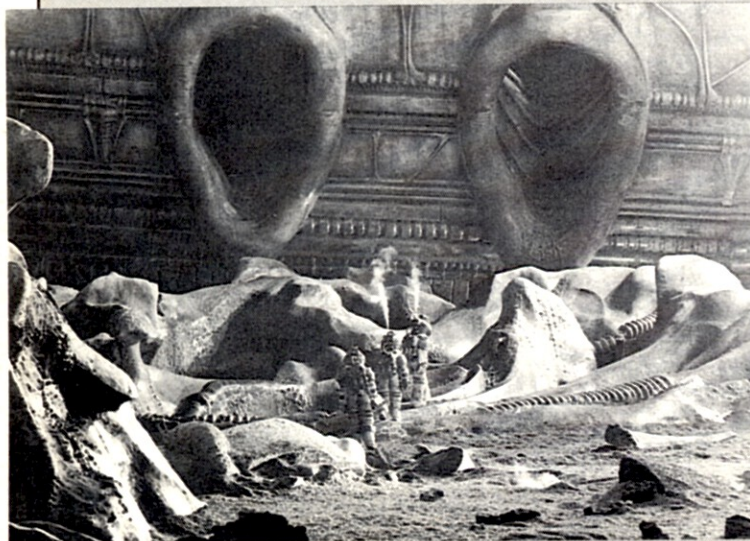


Above: With director Ridley Scott (l) and creature fabricator Carlo Rambaldi, Giger (rear) picks up his Oscar for special effects design for ALIEN in 1980. Below: Giger's aesthetic extended far beyond the film's effects: Left: Vaginal portals lead to the derelict ship's interior. Right: Discovering the egg chamber.

Giger's genius lay in combining the imagery of technology with that of biology, in offering us a vision of a future so different as to challenge many of our long-standing filmic assumptions about distinctions between humanity and alien, life and non-life, science fiction and fantasy. More than anyone else, it was Giger who persuaded us that the future may have as much to do with slime as with circuitry, that advanced life forms may have advanced beyond or developed outside of our mechanical- and electronic-centered conception of technology.

Accordingly, a better index to Giger's impact on SF film would be to note how subsequent movies as different as KRULL, INVADERS FROM MARS, BUCKAROO BANZAI, LIFE-FORCE and EXPLORERS have shown advanced alien living spaces to be organic and inexplicable, and how films as different as THE TERMINATOR, PREDATOR, and ROBOCOP have posited a new kind of existence blurring the imagery if not the concepts of the biological and the mechanical. Indeed, it should also be noted that many of the assumptions of current cyberpunk literature posit a distinctly Gigerish future.

What Giger has provided SF film in the '80s is iconography to rival that of the classic SF films of the past, a pattern of images as recognizable and as emblematic as was the figure of CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON's gillman or the majestic but sterile look of space travel in Stanley Kubrick's 2001. Giger may not have done this alone, but it's hard to imagine that it would have happened without him. □





rather see a series of slow build-ups towards climaxes instead of one immense build-up towards a single climax.

Since *ALIEN* your style seems to have become common property in Hollywood. Does that upset you, or are you just flattered?

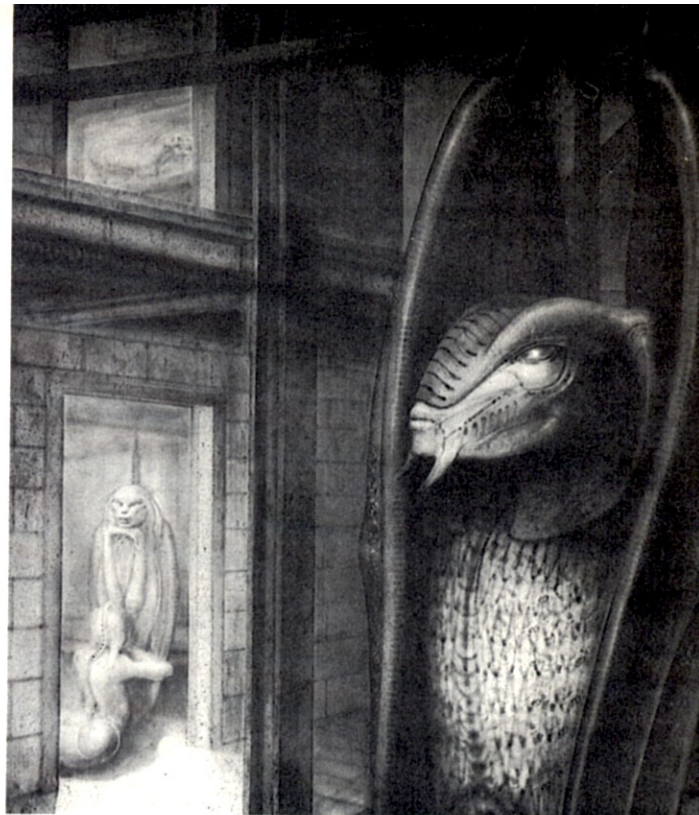
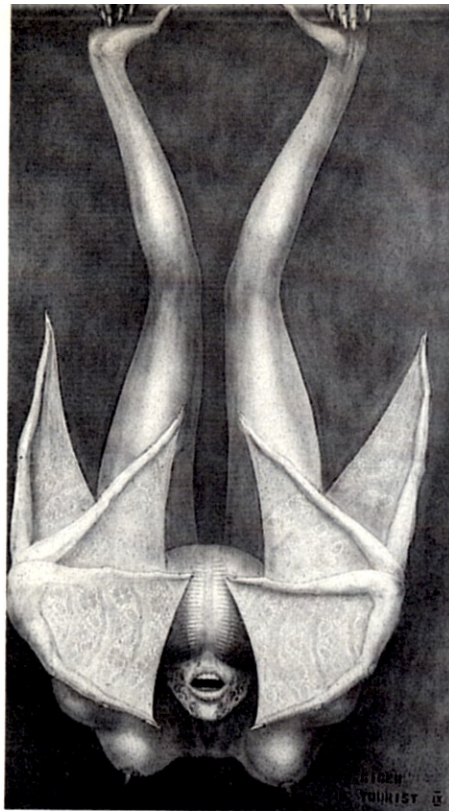
If it's done well I'm flattered, certainly. Although I usually come a day after the fair in two ways: I'm not being compensated and my name is never mentioned. If at least that would happen I could be content with the thought of having inspired something. And if the film turns out well, that would be fine. One should be glad with all good films that are made.

What about Francis Coppola's *CAPTAIN EO*, the short film starring Michael Jackson and Angelica Huston that's playing at Disneyland and . . .

I know, it looks just like my alien. I have seen some pictures of it. You know, some years ago 20th Century-Fox sued the firm Bally because they had fabricated an unauthorized *ALIEN* pin-ball machine. Bally had to pay dearly for that. I only received a couple of dollars and one of those pin-ball machines because I had transferred my rights in the alien design to Fox. So it's up to Fox to go after Coppola if they care to.

You don't seem angry with the way Hollywood filmmakers have ripped off your work? [The term "rip off" was a new one for Giger, who asked what it meant before answering.]

There are a lot of American filmmakers who copy my work.



Giger's alien designs for *THE TOURIST* (1982), an unfiled Universal project developed by director Brian Gibson, about a seedy New York hospital which keeps extraterrestrials from other worlds under sedation for the sadistic experimentation of scientists.

They send me a letter and say it is nice to have you in my film [Giger laughs]. So, I can't say anything. It's nice to be there. You know, sometimes people have the same idea at the same time. My stuff is not completely fresh. I have been influenced by Gaudi, Kubin, Dali . . .

What other artists have influenced you?

First and foremost is Hieronymus Bosch.

In 1982, at the request of director Brian Gibson who would later ask Giger to work on *POLTERGEIST II: THE OTHER SIDE*, Giger made seventy sketches and eleven paintings for a project entitled *THE TOURIST*. This science fiction/horror film, situated in

the near future, was to center on a gloomy New York hospital where different kinds of alien creatures are being kept under sedation with a drug that makes them feel at home while scientists expose them to sadistic experiments. A remorseful scientist decides to help transport the aliens back to their respective home planets. The film was never made because the production company, Universal, opted for a more cheerful science fiction film instead: *E.T.—THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL*.

What kind of preproduction art did you do for *THE TOURIST*?

I designed all kinds of aliens: flying, hanging, lying in the

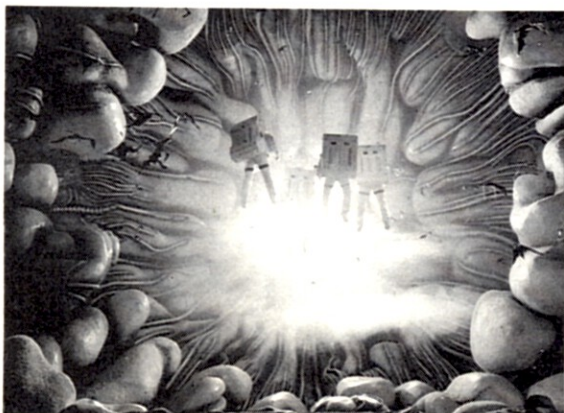
water. It was all very brutal. I don't think there's any chance the film will ever be made.

Why were you dissatisfied with Gibson's *POLTERGEIST II*?

I got mixed-up in the wrong project. I started working on that film under a misrepresentation. I thought: they're going to make a film with a big budget, which will allow to a large degree the input of my own fantasies. The producers [Mark Victor and Michael Grais, who also wrote the screenplay] confirmed this feeling and gave me the impression that I would be able to create something really new for this film and that the script could be adjusted if need be.

on Giger's credited designs for the original. Though not invited back, Giger's distinctive design sense nevertheless permeated the enterprise. A pity that producers Walter Hill and David Giler, who haven't approached Giger about contributing to *ALIEN III* either, have decided to settle for imitations with the "real thing" available.

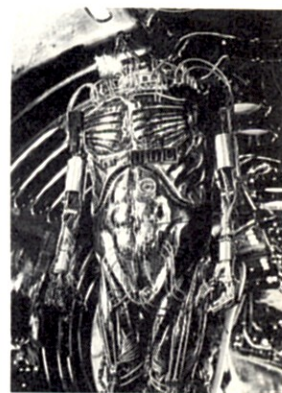
**LIFEFORCE** (1985). Tobe Hooper's stylish version of Colin Wilson's "Space Vampires" features a bio-gothic alien spaceship



The interior of the biomechanical spaceship in *LIFEFORCE*.

straight out of Giger, the work of designer John Graysmark and effects supervisor John Dykstra. *ALIEN* screenwriter Dan O'Bannon co-wrote the script with Don Jakoby.

**SATURN 3** (1980). This tale of a robot amok on a base on one of Saturn's moons was produced and directed by Stanley Donen from a story by the late *STAR WARS* designer John Barry. Hector, the Giger-style robot, was designed by Stuart Craig and effects man Colin Chivers.



Hector, the rampaging Giger-styled robot of *SATURN 3*.



**“I have never been satisfied with what filmmakers have done to my work in the past. I was horrified by POLTERGEIST II.”**

**- Surrealist H. R. Giger -**



Puppeteering "The Great Beast" of POLTERGEIST II: THE OTHER SIDE at Richard Edlund's Boss Film effects company. Giger claims his design idea was botched.

Unfortunately things went differently. They led me on and I was rather displeased by that. I ask myself: why don't they hire the same people who did the original? Why me? I only cause trouble because I'm not easily satisfied and I make bad publicity if I don't like the film.

For POLTERGEIST II you made drawings of The Reverend, as portrayed by the late Julian Beck. Why weren't these

used?

Originally the film was going to start with a scene in which The Reverend was to be discovered, sitting in the underground Cuesta Verde cave, surrounded by some of his followers. And I thought, in this film evil mostly stems from a worm. So I wanted to go along that line by showing two worm's tails protruding from the ears of The Reverend, thus marking

the evil. I wanted them to retract the instant a light shined on them, like when you enter a hole with a pocket-torch and the animals who live there hide themselves—the devil retracting his horns, that was the idea. But in the film they turned it into *scheisse*, with a skeleton dropping something from its mouth. I described it all perfectly well in my drawings, but apparently they didn't understand or they didn't want to understand. The same goes for the hill in the cave, with those corpses of the Reverend's followers lying on it: you can't even see it properly! It was filmed much too dark! Besides it was very badly constructed.

Were you ever asked to attend the shooting or the construction of the models?

No, there was no money available for that. But I also didn't really want to be there. My partner, Connie de Fries, was there to construct small scale models from my drawings. But he couldn't get a labor permit and wasn't allowed to contribute to the construction of the actual models. Apparently none of the special effects people understood my drawings. They didn't have the faintest notion of what could have

been done with them.

There are several scenes in ALIEN that are entirely Giger-styled, but you aren't really happy with the way your work was treated in that film, either . . .

For ALIEN I constructed the monster and other models myself. I was there and I watched how they were being filmed. But in that case there also was an incompetence . . . I wasn't very happy with ALIEN. No, in fact, it was rather terrible. Ridley Scott and I wanted well-trained people, for instance, technicians who had worked at Disneyland, who knew how to mechanize things. When I visited Disneyland I thought: my God, these are the people we should have had! Whoever made the robots of the Caribbean pirates and the haunted house, they could have worked on ALIEN, that would have been wonderful. *Ganz toll*. But on ALIEN there was a lack of experience and knowledge of good techniques. At Disneyland they have been doing these things for twenty years.

Wouldn't you have preferred the Alien Queen as POLTERGEIST II's Great Beast?

[Giger laughs] the Great

continued on page 34



Does THE INTRUDER WITHIN look at all familiar to you?

#### THE INTRUDER WITHIN

(1981). A made-for-TV movie about an oil-rig in the Atlantic plagued by a prehistoric creature that impregnates Linda Mason Green, who gives birth to its hideous offspring. The creature designs by James Cummins and Henry Golas reveal orthodontia that is strikingly similar to that of Giger's ALIEN. Said designer Golas (11:2:54), "I think if you actually compare the two, you will find they have no resemblance." His creature is at left, you decide.



Director Bill Malone's SCARED TO DEATH sewer monster.

#### SCARED TO DEATH

(1980). The directorial debut of Bill Malone, the writer and director of THE MIRROR, the forthcoming feature film to showcase Giger's design sense. Though Malone's first low-budget effort couldn't afford to pay Giger for his inspiration, Malone at least freely acknowledged the debt. Jim Suthors built the film's creature, a Syngenor (Synthetic Genetic Organism), which wanders the Los Angeles sewer system in search of prey in ALIEN-styled action.





POLTERGEIST II



METAMORPHOSIS



Giger's designs for one of the most disturbing scenes in POLTERGEIST II, in which actor Craig T. Nelson vomits up the embryo that grows into The Great Beast (inset). Rather than the quick cut action of the filmed scene, Giger's original concept as noted on his early preliminary sketches is even more disturbing, calling for the creature to come "out slowly, like a piece of shit."



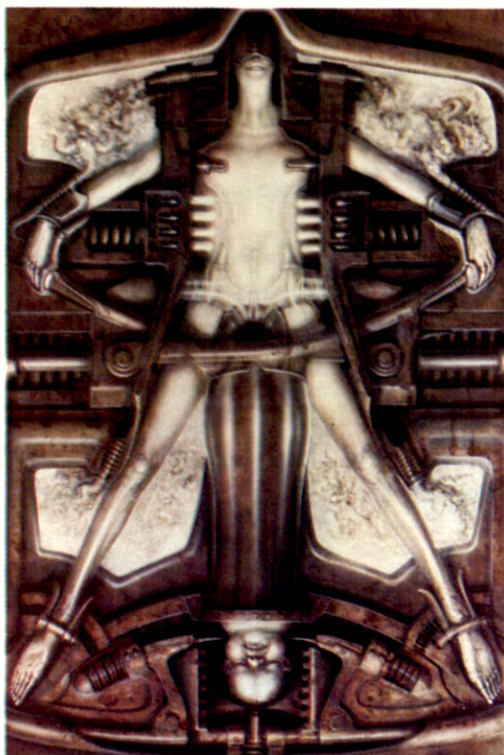
# THE MIRROR

## Giger's Necronomicon imagery comes alive on the screen.

By Sheldon Teitelbaum

*There exists a universe a dimension apart yet only a whisper away from our own... an ancient, evil civilization, a race of horrific living things spawned from the grotesque marriage of man and machine. Unable to reproduce, they have waited near death for eons... for someone from our dimension to open the portal between their world and ours... the mirror. The "Necronomicon"—the Book of the Dead, tells of a netherglass with the power to bend time and space... that 7000 years ago a seeker of dark secrets found the mirror and fell through a hole in time. For centuries the glass was lost. Now the mirror has been found again. And soon their wait will be over. The human female specimen they need will be theirs.*

So reads the promo for THE MIRROR, a \$6 million feature based upon the paintings in H. R. Giger's *Necronomicon*, set to begin an 11-week production schedule in April. William Malone, its director, has assembled some of the best effects and design people in the business: Michael (FLIGHT OF THE NAVIGATOR) Novotny as production designer; Robert and Dennis Skotak (ALIENS) in charge of special visual effects; Doug Beswick (STAR WARS, THE TERMINATOR, ALIENS)



Stillbirth Machine, a 1976 Giger painting from his book *Necronomicon*, 4.5'x6.5', which serves as one of the reproduction images for the world of THE MIRROR.

as special makeup effects man, and Giger himself, whom Malone persuaded to fly to Los Angeles to supervise overall conceptual design for the film.

And lest you have any doubts about Malone's record—his last effort, CREATURE, did fall a bit short of being a genre *tour de force*—consider this: Giger was not at all pleased with the outcome of his most recent venture into filmmaking—the abortive POLTERGEIST II. Intimates say that after that travesty, Giger in-

tended never again to get suckered in by another slick Hollywood deal. In which case Malone must have shown him one hell of a hot script, because this is an independent production, and Malone doesn't have scads of money to salve Giger's wounds from a botched construction job.

Indeed, the prospect of translating intact the acclaimed grotesqueries of *The Necronomicon* into three dimensional form was apparently impossible for either the Swiss artist or these other effects wizards to resist. Mention Giger, these people are eager. Explained art director Novotny: "How to invest the next year of your life is always a major decision. But when a project has the potential to be a knockout—Academy Award material—we're willing to take a stab at it."

Malone described the project as "Alice Through the Looking Glass meets H. P. Lovecraft." He wrote a first draft of the script in 1980, after finding a French edition of Giger's *Necronomicon* in the dealers' room at a science fiction convention. "It blew me away," he said. "And later, when I heard he was doing Ridley Scott's ALIEN, it was very easy to pick out what the alien

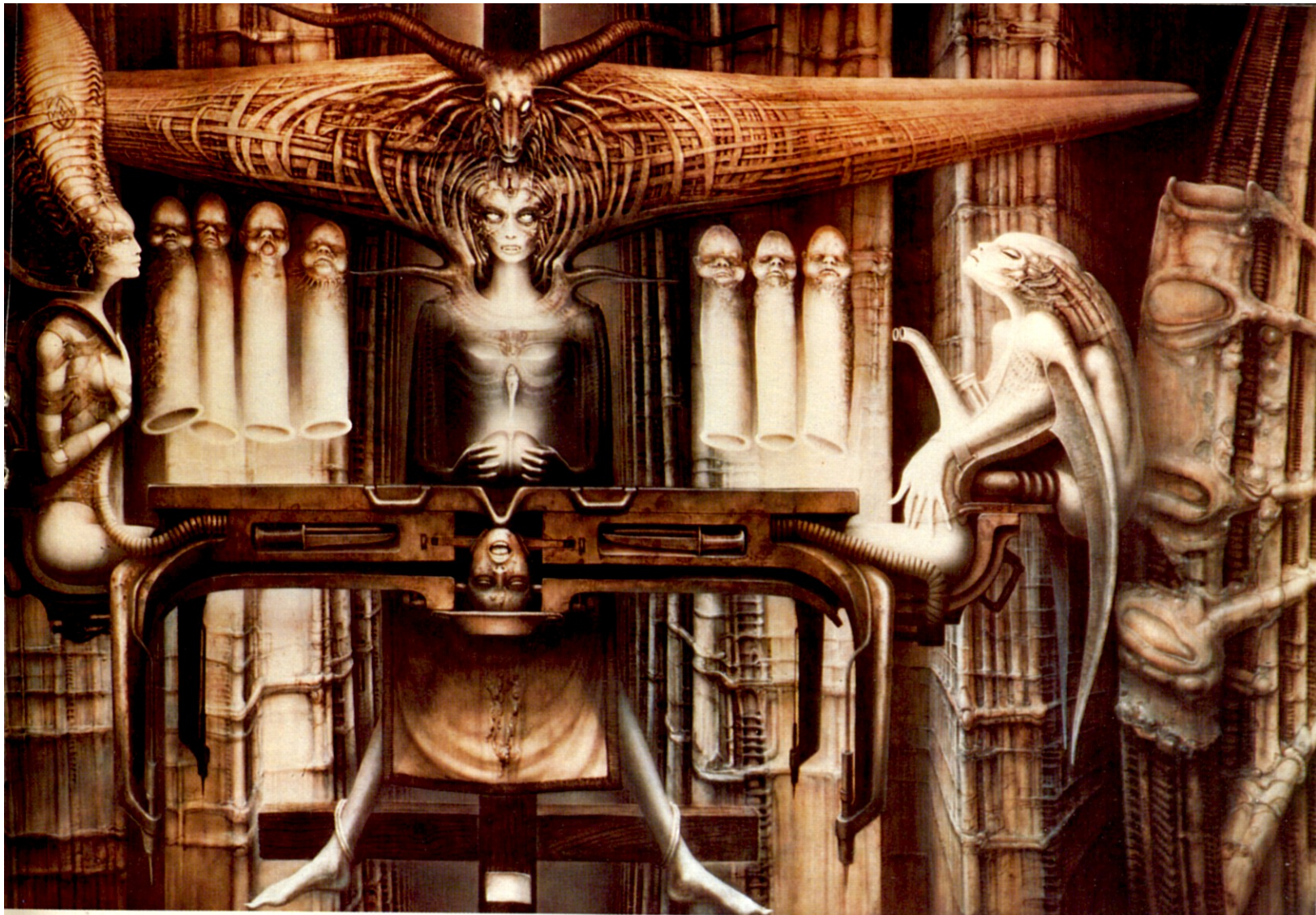


was going to look like—there was only one suitable painting in the book.

"I think the stuff in ALIEN is the best of the film adaptations of Giger's work," Malone added. But he thinks Scott only scratched the surface. "Giger has a wealth of stuff—images even more powerful than those in ALIEN. It gets you on a primordial, gut level. His paintings are disturbing, but you keep wanting to look at them anyway. They are scary but also elegant. I kept going back to them, and the story just came to me."

Malone's story documents the travails of housewife July Daley, whom a race of Gigeresque bio-mechanical monstrosities has chosen to spawn a newly-invigorated race of human/machine hybrids. Daley runs aground when she hangs an antique mirror on her wall that serves as a portal into their dimension. Much beasting about ensues as they try to drag her back to their home turf.





Two Necronomicon paintings by Giger which serve as preproduction designs for the film imagery of *THE MIRROR*. Above: *The Spell II*, a 1974 three piece "environment," measuring about 8'x14.' Right: *The way of the magician*, one of four paintings in Giger's *The Passage Temple*, with steps leading to godhood.

After Malone completed *CREATURE* for Moshe Diamant's Trans World Entertainment—the picture was made for \$1.3 million and did \$8 million theatrically and millions more in video—he took his script, then called *DEADLY IMAGES*, to Vista. "But they were going through a bunch of changes and, as it turned out, could only finance one picture. They did *FRIGHT NIGHT* instead, and threw us out the door."

Later in 1985, Malone met Jack Murphy, a Canadian producer who had handled the Canadian distribution of Malone's first film, *SCARED TO DEATH*, in 1979. Murphy, who had moved to Los Angeles three years earlier, enthusiastically embraced the project.

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GIGER 85

Unused design concepts for POLTERGEIST II by H. R. Giger, showing the artist's concept of a "Smokebeast," an omen appearing to the Indian shaman at the film's beginning. Below: Views of Julian Beck as the Reverend Kane, showing Giger's use of a worm motif as a symbol of evil, also abandoned.



THE SMOKE BEAST  
P. 30

POLTERGEIST II  
HR GIGER 85



**“I want to work on a film with someone who is aiming for quality and something new, not for profit only, someone like Fellini.”**

**- Surrealist H. R. Giger -**

Beast in *POLTERGEIST II* was really *scheisse*. Very bad. Yes, I would have preferred the Alien Queen. Thus you can see a designer has no influence whatsoever in these matters. From designs I made long ago something very good is derived, while my more recent work has been screwed up.

*Why are you still willing to do film design after all your disappointments?*

I should like to work with someone who is aiming for quality and something new rather than profit only. I receive a lot of scripts from beginners, people who are going to do their first film and admire me. I'd like to be asked by someone like Fellini. That would really enthuse me. Unfortunately it never happens [Giger laughs]. Dan O'Bannon, with whom I'm still regularly in touch, keeps telling me he would like to do Lovecraft's *The Colour Out of Space* with me as soon as he's able to raise the necessary funds. That could be interesting because he's definitely one of the greatest Lovecraft experts around.

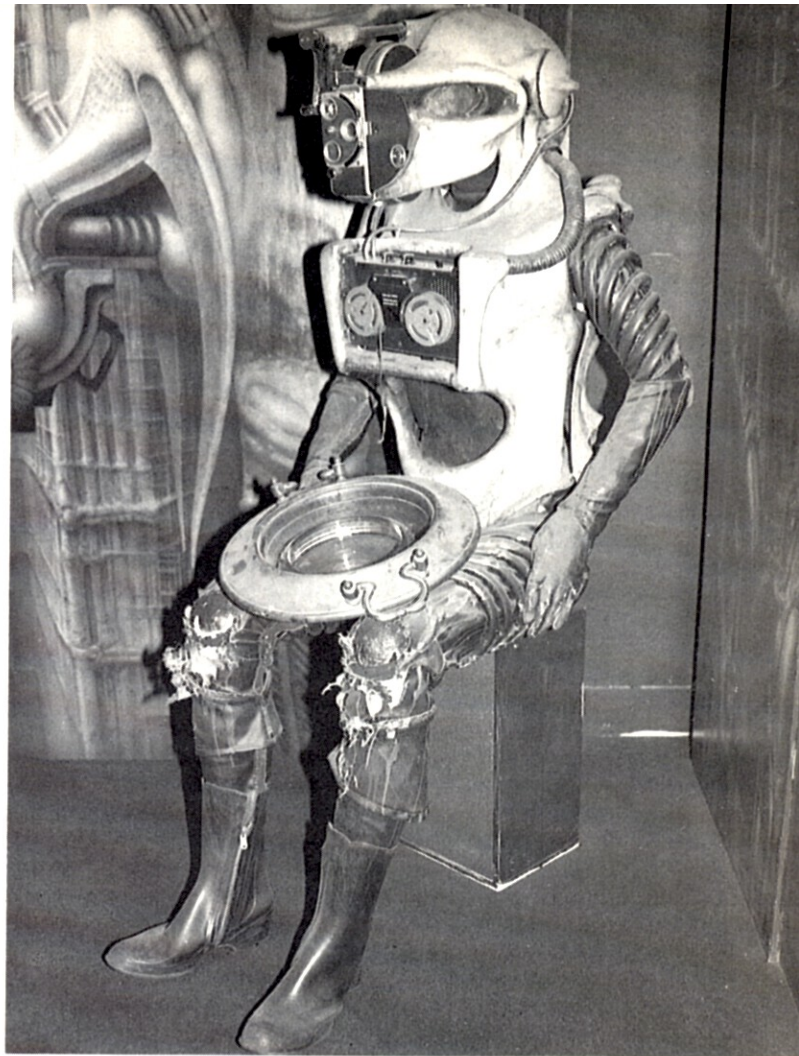
But I consider everything I'm offered. Since *ALIEN* I have received approximately fifteen scripts for which they want me as a designer. Only

one, I think, was in German. All the others were in English or in French. For me it's difficult to comprehend those. I always ask: please translate the script in German, it makes my imagination work better.

*You made designs for DUNE (9:1:35 and 14:4/5:33) for two aborted productions, but when David Lynch finally filmed it, you were not involved. Why?*

I was very eager to be. Through friends I asked Lynch if he was interested in my cooperation. I never heard from him. Later I came to know that he was upset because he thought we copied the chestbuster in *ALIEN* from his monster baby in *ERASERHEAD*, which was not so. Ridley Scott and I hadn't even seen that film at the time. If one film influenced *ALIEN* it was *THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE*. I would have loved to collaborate with Lynch on *DUNE* but apparently he wanted to do all the designs by himself. I think he did a great job. I admire Lynch tremendously. I think he's one of the greatest filmmakers and I would very much like to work for him some time.

*Do you see any points of comparison between your work and Lynch's oeuvre as a director?*



Giger's alien costume for *SWISS MADE*, a 1969 short by F. M. Murer about a space visitor who records everything he sees, sits as an ashtray in Giger's gallery/studio.

Sometimes elements in my paintings resemble the technology of the last century, similar to Lynch. I use tubes, pipes, and broken down machinery.

*Can you name your favorite films and directors?*

Lynch's *BLUE VELVET*. Ridley Scott. I'm not crazy about fantastic films. I prefer reality.

*In 1985 you designed the poster for FUTUREKILL*

*(15:2:19). Did you have anything else to do with that film?*

No. When Ron Moore, the director, visited an exposition of my work near Zurich he asked me if I would care to do the poster art for his film, which was being edited. Moore showed me a couple of photographs of this character with a skull-like head which looked just like it had been stolen from one of my works. I thought that

#### INVADERS FROM MARS

(1986). Director Tobe Hooper again, this time with a remake of the 1953 film by William Cameron Menzies. Instead it looked more like *ALIEN*, with creatures by Stan Winston. Rather than Giger, concept designer William Stout cited the work of a Giger influence, that of Spanish architect Antonio Gaudi, as inspiration for the film's biomechanical look. The film's production designer, Les Dille, had in fact worked with Giger on the original *ALIEN*.



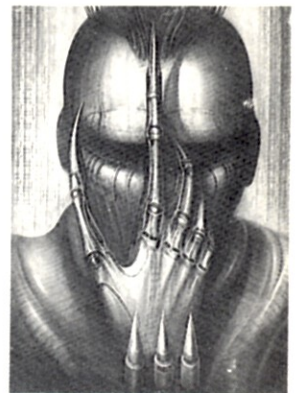
*INVADERS FROM MARS*, Giger-inspired or was it Antonio Gaudi?

#### FUTUREKILL (1985).

Giger did the poster art for this Texas-filmed low-budgeter about violence-prone college punks who dress up in costumes styled on his biomechanical look. The film doesn't quite live up to the poster.

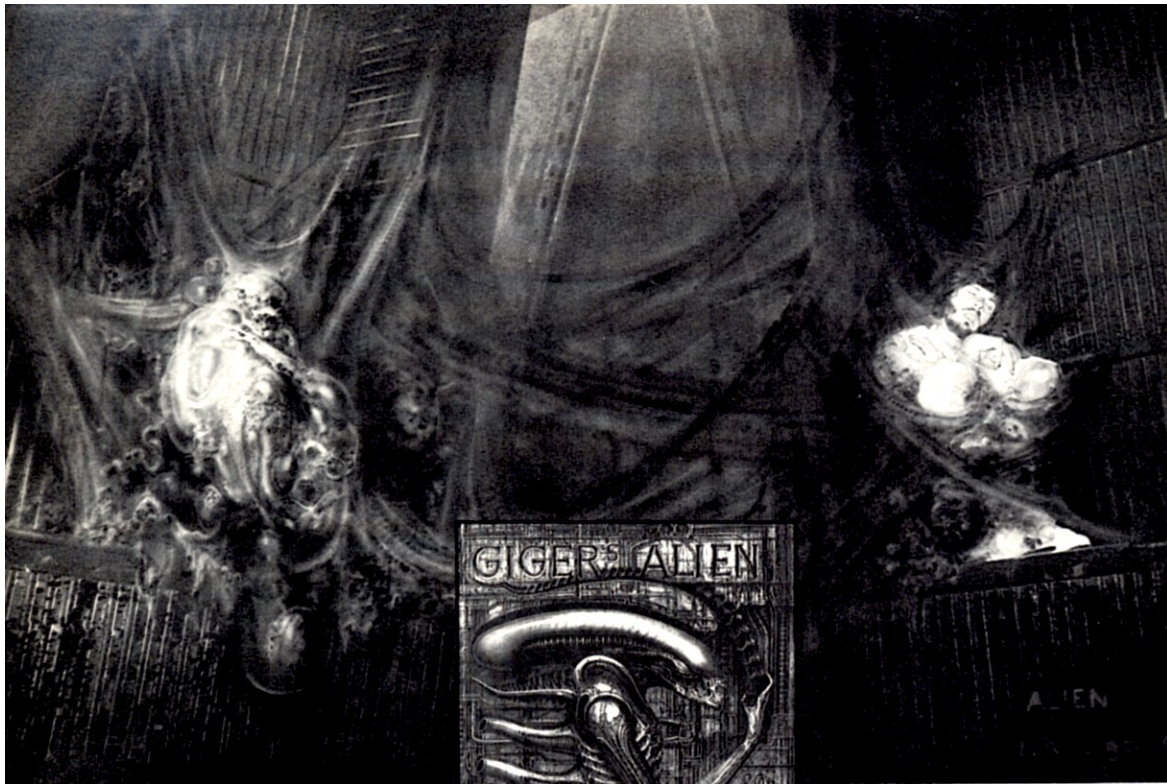
#### GALAXY OF TERROR

(1981). A Roger Corman *ALIEN* rip-off directed by Bruce Clark. The designs of an alien pyramid and biomechanical landscape straight out of Giger's original concepts were by James Cameron and



Giger's *FUTUREKILL* poster, a chance to cash-in himself.





About The Cover: Giger is shown cocooned by his own Alien, a take-off on the design he made for a scene cut from



ALIEN (above), combined with the cover motif of his book "Giger's Alien" (inset) a diary of his work on the production.

since they had copied that so well already I might as well do the poster. Half a year later I saw the finished film and it was... how shall I put it... it was very colorful, whereas my poster was rather black and white. I liked the colors in the film, they reminded me of BLACK ORPHEUS. But the rest... the poster was well printed, though.

Moore promised to write a script, entirely focused on me and my work: BIOGENESIS. That was a year ago and I'm still waiting.

How do you see yourself as an artist?

I'm an artist on the fringe. Fantastic art is never "in." There seems to be few people

who like fantastic art. In Zurich I think I'm alone. Switzerland is not a very fantastic land. If someone talks about Switzerland, it's always about banks and money or mountains. Not about art...

Your paintings are incredibly detailed, representing a tremendous amount of work. Have you considered using a looser style?

It depends. At the moment I no longer do the large three-piece wall paintings. I do smaller ones. I don't do a lot of originals, about 25 paintings in a year. They are not magical like The Spell. I work best under pressure.

You paint in very muted tones. Do you ever plan to use

vivid colors?

Sometimes I try to use colors, but it doesn't work really. I find that black and white or monochromatic schemes work best for me. Color is against the force of my work. A painting like The Spell would be terrible in color.

How do you paint? Do you make sketches first?

No. It's all airbrush sprayed on paper which has been glued to wood. I use mainly ink and white acrylic paint. Then I put lacquer over it to make sure nothing wet can destroy it. When I do the giant murals, I start on one side of the painting and work to the other. I make sure the angles are right,

but I have no idea what's coming. I use paper that measures 420x240 cm. There's no bigger paper than that. I can't move the paintings for display unless I cut them up. They're really made for this room.

What about the smaller ones? Do you use the same method?

Yes. I just start from one side and go to the other. I paint whatever comes to my mind. There is no pre-planning. For instance, the ones that feature penis imagery and grotesque baby heads, I just felt like doing that. People have said that I look like these babies a little bit. At the time, 1973, there was a problem with oil and gas—the energy crisis. You can see burners in some of my paintings. The other images must also have some reason behind them. Condoms, of course are very "in" now.

You've said many of these images come from your dreams...

You know, sometimes I get tired answering the same questions over and over again. Why do I paint the things I paint? That's beyond words. I have so many different stories to tell, which I can only draw. And everybody always thinks I'm only interested in dark, morbid things, whereas I take a genuine pleasure in cheerful things.

Do you have very bad nightmares?

Often, yeah. Like everybody, I think terrible things.

My dreams are never this bad.

No? This one [Giger points to his wall mural The Spell, see page 32-33] is not bad. Do you



ILM's high-stepping Giger-styled chestbuster for SPACEBALLS.

Bob Skotak, who went on to direct and supervise the effects for ALIENS.

**SPACEBALLS** (1987). The funniest bit in this Mel Brooks parody of STAR WARS is actually a take-off on ALIEN's chest-bursting sequence, replete with a Giger-style alien that does a high-stepping dance routine, adorned with a hat and cane, after bursting forth from the chest of actor John Hurt, reprising his role from the original film. ILM built the Giger look-a-like.

#### FORBIDDEN WORLD

(1982). Another Roger Corman ALIEN rip-off, filmed by Alan Holzman to utilize the sets built by Corman for GALAXY OF TERROR. The film's alien, built by Steve Neil and John Carl Buechler, and sculpted by Bob and Dennis Skotak, bears more than a casual resemblance to Giger's dolichocephalic creature design of the monster seen in ALIEN.

Bargain basement Giger, the alien of Roger Corman's rip-off entitled FORBIDDEN WORLD.





# GIGER

## THE ROOTS OF IMAGINATION

*Giger's art speaks in the metaphoric language of dreams, not to the conscious mind, but to its hidden underlying roots.*

By Vincent Di Fate

One looks at the works of Hans Giger and sees in them the influences of many artists. Some of his landscapes resemble those of Max Ernst in texture and palette, particularly Ernst's *Day and Night* (1943) and *The Eye of Silence* (1944). His backgrounds bristle with complex details reminiscent of the dream architecture of Antonio Gaudi's unfinished masterpiece *The Church of the Holy Family* or of Ferdinand Cheval's *Dream Palace*. His merging of biological form with mechanical artifact is worthy of the machine-tooled perfection of Marcel Duchamp. There is a hint of the cryptic symbolism of Bocklin, a touch of the timelessness of Tanguy, a smattering of the often startling photo-realism of Dali. Giger fools the eye with a flamboyant showmanship like Escher's, evokes the demonic erotica of Bosch and stretches upon it, at strategic points, the glistening embryonic membrane of Matta. Occasionally whimsical, invariably complex, Giger's art is rife with subtle nuances and baroque redundancies, meticulously crafted from edge to edge in a completely controlled environment where nothing is sacred or immune to his acid genius.

As a child, poor in his studies and plagued by nightmares and bizarre waking dreams, it is little wonder that Giger should come to embrace the tenets of surrealism. At about age five, a photo-spread in *Life* for Jean Cocteau's *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* exposed Giger to the potentials of film as a medium for artistic



Giger in 1978, painting his preproduction design of the derelict ship's egg chamber for *ALIEN*.

expression and provided the catalyst for his daytime visions.

At eighteen, the artist was employed as a draftsman by the Meissen architectural firm where he developed strengths in formal composition and nurtured an appreciation for the symmetry and ornamental patterns common to the style of church interiors. From 1962 to 1966, he attended The School of Arts and Crafts in Zurich where he studied interior and industrial design, securing a designer's position at the firm of Andreas Christen's upon his graduation. In that same year, Giger met Li Tobler, an actress, with whom he carried

on an often turbulent love affair until her death, by her own hand, in 1975.

These details of personal history seem to have produced a significant effect on Giger's art. He sees little of the unsettling nature of his work, but rather views his art as cathartic. Indeed, his *Passage* paintings, a series of meticulously crafted pieces produced from the late 1960s to about 1973, represent his brightest and most well-integrated use of color and were used therapeutically by the artist to free himself of some of the more troubling aspects of his waking nightmares.

Although a shadowy presence

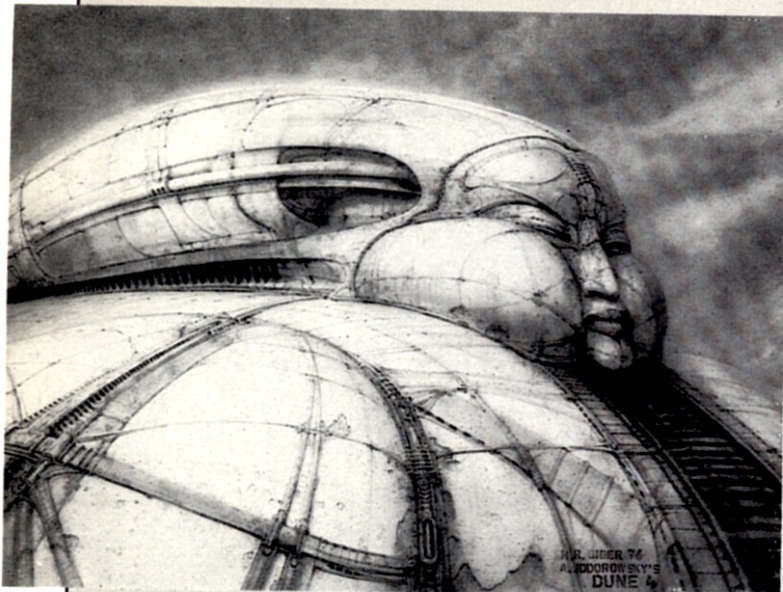
has long endured in his art, the tragic death of Li Tobler seems to have marked an increase in the use of pervading and oppressive darks. Despite the artist's claims of an upbeat nature to his work (which seems to evade the detection of most viewers), there is little doubt of the power of Giger's imagery. If the charting of the psychic terrain is indeed the true mission of surrealist art, then it is on this level that Giger speaks most clearly, for his is a most persuasive voice to this inner dialogue and we cannot avoid being drawn to it, no matter how obtrusive or shocking or intimidating. Giger speaks in the metaphoric language of dreams, not to the wakeful mind, but to the hidden intelligence within.

Many of his early drawings were done in india ink applied by pen to tracing paper where the images were carefully and methodically defined. The spattering of ink from a toothbrush through a fine wire sieve was used to

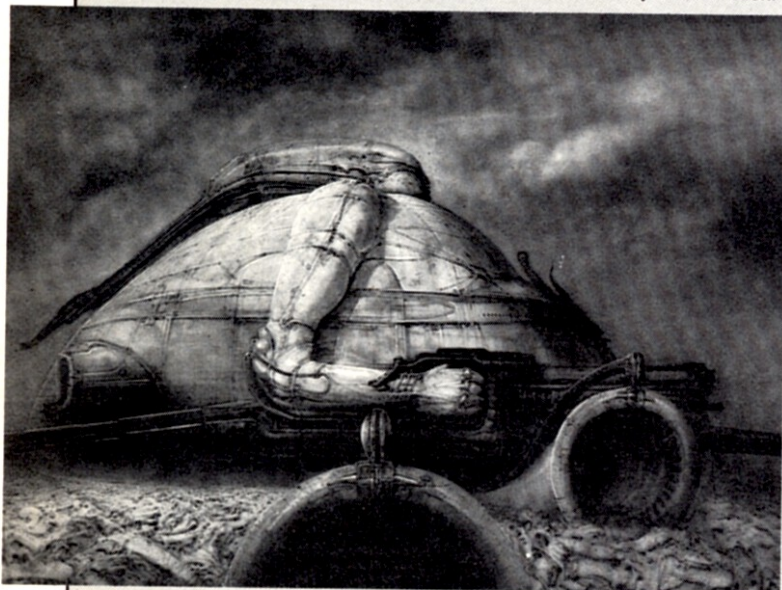
cover large areas in a method approximating the effects of airbrush. In the late '60s Giger experimented briefly with oils on a series of small landscapes, but found the medium too time consuming. He turned to the use of airbrush in 1971 and has largely remained with this technique. The artist applies thin layers of india ink by airbrush directly to waterproof paper which has been mounted on chipboard or plywood panels, no longer requiring the use of preliminary drawing. To this, transparent layers of acrylic paint are applied until the desired colorations are

continued on page 38





Giger's 1975 designs for the unfilmed French production of *DUNE* on which he met Dan O'Bannon, the author of *ALIEN*. Giger's Harkonnen castle is a symbol of aggression, set on a hill of charred bones, with a face that spits destruction.



**“If the charting of the psychic terrain is indeed the true mission of surrealist art, then it is on this level that Giger’s work speaks to us most clearly.”**

achieved.

Similar in style to Yves Tanguy, Giger’s use of color possesses a quality much like that of a tinted photograph, with the finely rendered images contained in the preliminary inkwork which functions as an underpainting for the acrylics. Thus, color assumes a very secondary role, with the main emphasis on the selection and juxtaposing of images and on Giger’s considerable skills at drawing and composition. Like the most vivid of our dreams, they are works best remembered for the strength of their content to which the application of color seems vague and ephemeral and ultimately of little relevance.

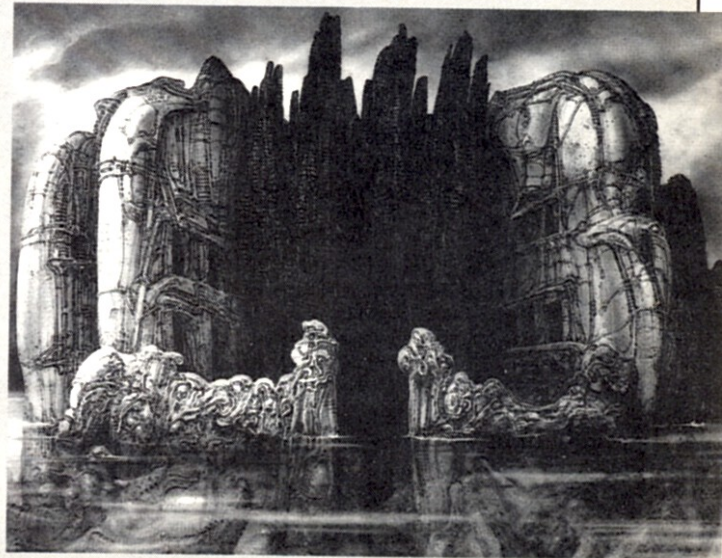
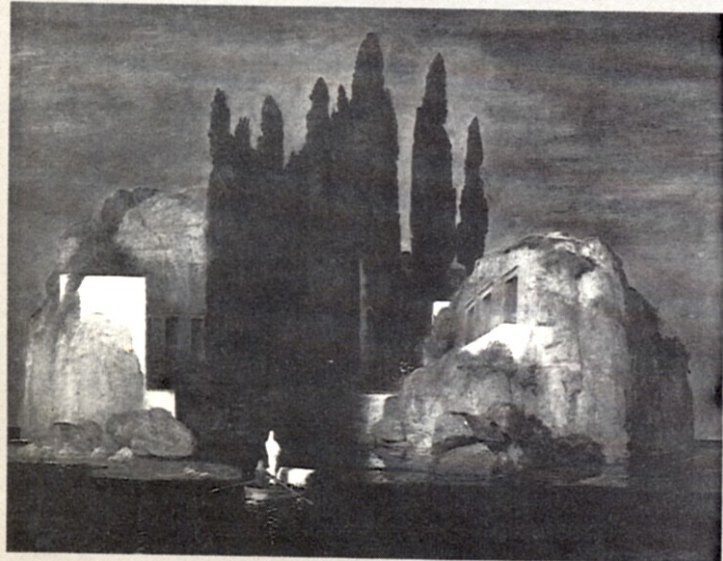
Giger’s first involvement with motion pictures came in 1969 with F. M. Murer’s forty-five-minute science fiction short *SWISS MADE 2069*, for which the artist contributed a number of designs utilizing his biomechanical method of combining natural and man-made elements. In 1975 he participated in an ill-fated attempt to bring Frank Herbert’s sprawling ecological SF novel *Dune* to the screen. Under the creative control of director Alexandro Jodorowsky, a significant number of drawings were prepared by Giger, Chris

Foss and others which showed imagination and promise somewhat beyond the film which director David Lynch finally brought to fruition in 1984. Involvement with Jodorowsky, however, led to a brief meeting with Dan O’Bannon in Paris and O’Bannon was later responsible for bringing H. R. Giger into the planning of *ALIEN*.

It is in *ALIEN* that Giger’s talents truly soar, from his organic interiors for the derelict spaceship, to the bleak, oppressive landscape of the alien world, to the creation of a creature so unique and fearsome of aspect as to have inspired a seemingly endless number of imitators.

Ridley Scott’s *ALIEN* is still, in its soul, just a B-movie in fancy trappings with more than a casual kinship to such ‘50s film fare as *IT! THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE* and other lower-bill potboilers. It has become memorable in the annals of SF cinema, not for its compelling story of survival or its relentless, dogged pacing, but for the wolf it hides beneath its glossy, state-of-the-art sheep’s clothing. Giger’s creature is something dangerously close to the beast in all of us and from whose countenance we are powerless to look away. □

Using many of the mystical properties of “Isle of the Dead” (left), Giger transforms this symbolist masterpiece into his own “Homage to Bocklin,” painted in 1977.





feel bad here?

*No, I don't feel bad here. I like this type of artwork. It's interesting. To me, though, it is a scary place.*

*How painful is it for you to sell one of your paintings?*

I don't sell the large paintings. Once I sold one to a collector and that was quite hard. Those in this room I will never give away. I want to keep them together. When *The Spell* went to Japan on exhibit, I had another behind it that took its place.

*Guns are present in much of your work. What is your fascination with them?*

Guns are like an air brush. You can affect something from far away and not be directly in contact with your subject.

*Do you shoot?*

Sometimes. There isn't much occasion to do so here in the city. Yesterday, I shot in my small room because there are a lot of rats, or something. They make me so angry. In the middle of the night I made a hole in the ceiling with my drill. Instead of a bullet I put some shot in and blasted into the hole. Then there was peace. It was about three o'clock in the morning after two hours being unnerved. Then it began in another part of my bedroom and I did the same.

*Have you ever had a supernatural experience?*

Yes. Sometimes I go out of my body from my bed and fly about 40 or 50 centimeters off the ground. I can see my feet in the foreground. This has happened about eight times. Sometimes I've drunk too much wine or taken some sleeping pills. I



**Death**, Giger's 1977 painting (2.5'x4') from his *Necronomicon*, which serves as a preproduction design for *THE MIRROR*, a forthcoming film by director Bill Malone which will bring Giger's surreal imagery to the screen more powerfully than ever before.

feel myself go outside this room right through the walls.

*You have said you consider your work upbeat. How do you reconcile that with your obsession with death and dark imagery.*

What is this word, "upbeat?"

*Happy or positive. Do you feel your work is that way?*

No, I don't think so. Happy colors are mostly green, blue, and red. My colors are more akin to an old basement, like rotting potatoes, or worms from the potatoes. My paintings are interior paintings, what I imagine on the inside.

*Do you feel your work is pessimistic, then?*

Probably, yes. It depends on your level. If your feet are on the ground, it could be nega-

tive. I think my work is positive because it's not a destroyed landscape. The ladies are shown like in a peep show. They are not ugly, but shown in a nice way.

*How would you describe something that is not positive?*

Boring things. Visions of Hell and Hieronymus Bosch are all positive because something is happening. The most terrible thing for me is if nothing happens; no movement.

*You mean like still-lives? Have you ever tried to paint flowers or bowls of fruit?*

Yes, I try.

*What do they look like?*

Nice. I did some in color for my mother.

*What does she think about the phalluses and cigar chomp-*

*ing dead babies seen in your paintings?*

She likes my work very much because she's my mother. [Giger laughs] Sometimes she's a little ashamed of what I do. If there are other people around, sometimes she has to defend my work.

*In his book, Danse Macabre, Stephen King wrote, speaking about the world of horror films: "They do not love death, as some have suggested; they love life. They do not celebrate deformity, but by dwelling on deformity they sing of health and energy... They are the barber's leeches to the psyche, drawing not bad blood but anxiety." Do you see your work in that same light?*

Oh, definitely. □

**CAPTAIN EO** (1987). This Michael Jackson short unspooling at Disney's theme parks features an alien design on Angelica Huston straight out of H. R. Giger, right down to the monochromatic color scheme. While admitting the similarities, makeup designers Tom and Bari Burman said their Giger look was "unintentional."



**CAPTAIN EO**: the similarity to Giger, purely "unintentional."

**VIDEODROME** (1983). Director David Cronenberg and makeup artist Rick Baker borrowed Giger's biomechanical look for

several of the film's key concepts: a living TV set made of flesh; a vaginal slit in James Woods' chest into which a video cassette is inserted; and a scene in which Woods' hand merges with his gun.

**DEEP SPACE** (1988). And they keep coming. The latest Giger rip-off is this Trans World Entertainment production, directed by Fred Olen Ray, to be released later this year, starring Bo Svenson. Steve Neill created the suit for a Giger *ALIEN* look-alike.



Steve Neill's look-alike for TWE's upcoming *DEEP SPACE*.



The Many Faces Of:

# Ken Myers



**R**ETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD, PART 2's makeup expert Ken Myers and some of the effects heads and an articulated puppet he created for this follow-up to 1985's surprise cult hit!

*By Steve Biodrowski*

When producer Tom Fox, who found unexpected success with the Dan O'Bannon-scripted RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD in 1985, set about making a sequel he called upon the talents of makeup wiz Ken Myers, who had stepped in to save the first feature when trouble arose. Though the script for RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD PART 2 contributed nothing new to the horror/comedy format established by its forebearer, it did lay the groundwork for Myers' grandly gruesome effects work.

The sequel originated when writer/director Ken Wiederhorn came to Tom Fox' attention through his script for DARK TOWER, which Greenfox Films co-financed with Howard International Pictures. Wiederhorn was originally set to direct that film, but when financing took longer than expected, Fox offered him the chance to helm RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD, PART 2.

At the time, Fox was already developing various ideas of his own for the sequel, but none of them appealed to Wiederhorn. "I thought they were all pretty anemic," said Wiederhorn. "Fox was very much trying to do a straight-ahead horror movie—when O'Bannon had already made this terrific movie that was creepy and funny and clever—and I couldn't understand why Fox was regressing into something standard and boring. I talked Fox into the idea that he should continue in the same vein. That was the condition on which I would be involved—that I was not doing a straight ahead zombie movie. What can you do with zombies? You're basically down to variations on gore shots."

Having taken on the assignment Wiederhorn next grappled with the problem of establishing a perceivable level of continuity between the two films. "The thing I loved about the first movie was the relationship between Jimmy Karen and Tom Matthews. The really terrific idea that Dan [O'Bannon] hit on that would be impossible to improve upon



was that these two guys died without knowing it and then wouldn't accept it. I thought for a couple of weeks and decided there was no way I was going to come up with anything better, so I decided I would appropriate it and use it again. Why knock my brains out trying to be different and probably not being any better?"

To create the living dead horde this time out, Myers had a bigger budget, a crew of 18 to 25 people, and two and a half months of preproduction time. Said Myers, "It still wasn't enough, but it's the closest you can come to being happy."

Myers' main disadvantage this time was that production designer William Stout, who contributed greatly to the look of PART I, wasn't back for the sequel. "They wanted me to design and there was no time, so I just started sculpting," said Myers. "I took that as far as I could in terms of main characters, and then the people that I brought in were allowed the freedom to go with the sculpture. It would have been wonderful to have Stout back." Included in Myers' makeup crew were: Brent Armstrong, Karen Asano, Craig Caton, Eric Fiedler, Steve Frakes, Chris Goehle, Kim Lee, Charles Lutkus, Mark Maitry, Shawn McEnroe, Joe Reader, Tony Rupprecht, Andy Schoneberg, Russell Seifert, Mike Smithson, Loren Soman, Michael Spatola, and Doug White.

As before, the film featured background zombies in rubber slip-on masks, including one which bore a distinct resemblance to Samuel Clemens. Myers originally wanted to get even more outrageous with the concept of dead celebrities such as Elvis Presley but ultimately decided against it. "The background zombies were much broader, bigger, so that the camera would pick them up. Some turned out well enough for us to use them in close-up, although it scared the hell out of me the first day Ken (Wiederhorn) did it."

The various foreground zombies are a combination of prosthetic appliances and highlight shadow makeup. Seven actors, dancers, and mimes form the A-Team zombies, or what Myers called "the Ghoul Pool," adding, "That avenue afforded us a much better look. There were well over 100 featured ghoul roles, all recycled through them."

Myers requested actor Brian Peck (who appeared in the first film) as one of his A-Team zombies. Said Peck, "The biggest disappointment on RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD was that there were so many different ideas being kicked around. Bill Stout did some great designs, but none of that ended up on the screen. This time the zombies were really something special. One night I actually was a '50s bobby soxer woman: I had water balloons for tits, peanut M&Ms for nipples, and horrible '50s glasses."

In what amounts to a cameo appearance, Allan Trautman returned as the Tar Man. "We got Allan Trautman back because you can't have a Tar Man without that big loose-jointed guy," said Myers, who redesigned the character to have the same feeling but not quite the same look. "We made him slimmer, more solid. In the first film we melted down and ended up with a

creature that was larger—that doesn't make sense. This time the character in the barrel changed form by swelling up, which is a pretty standard gag; we took a chemical and pumped it into the makeup. The change was instantaneous."

A great deal of puppetry and mechanical effects were added in post-production to augment the makeup. For instance, a scene in a hospital corridor featured an extended gunfight between humans and zombies, which results in a number of severed limbs, including a pair of mechanical legs which continue to walk around on their own.

The work done by Myers was so effective it even convinced a *real-life* cop, according to an incident recounted by returning star James Karen. "I was leaving our Sierra Madre location the night I was killed with squibs, and I had eaten a soldier's brains. It was a wet, terrible night, and about six o'clock in the morning we finished. I just said 'the hell with it,' got into my car, and didn't bother taking off my makeup."

"As I was driving home, I got the flashing lights behind me. I pulled over, and the cop came around the side of the car and said, 'What the...? Oh, Jesus, have you been in an accident?' I said 'No, I'm making a movie.' He said, 'Get off the road—you could cause accidents. Follow me.' He escorted me home and said, 'Can I get a picture of you in makeup?' It was funny. I had been going fast—65 or 70 mph—but he forgot all about giving me a ticket when he got a look at me."

According to Myers, director Ken Wiederhorn was more open to improvisation than O'Bannon. For example, Myers built a radio-controlled woman's head for a zombie that gets decapitated but keeps talking. Wiederhorn liked it so much that it was kept in the film as a sort of running gag, carried around by another zombie, and Myers would operate the head while ad libbing remarks.

As director, Wiederhorn felt his biggest departure from the first film was in the overall tone of the piece. His idea was to place less emphasis on the horror and more on the humor. "I think there's a trend which is that horror movies are hyphenating into horror/comedies. So much of horror is right on the line—it's so easy to push it over the line. But I don't think humor has anything to do with parody or satire. I did not feel that I was parodying any other horror or zombie movie. A sequel can be anything. Just because it says PART 2 doesn't mean it is in fact a sequel. If you're too slavishly devoted to the original, you become imitative; if you say 'I'm gonna be radically different,' you run the risk of cheating the audience. It's quite a dilemma."

Wiederhorn's dilemma became evident when Lorimar released the sequel to audience indifference last January. Wiederhorn gets the plot rolling by having the army accidentally dump a load of steel drums containing the living dead into a river. The drums are later found and opened by three adolescents, thus releasing the famous "Tar-Man" of the first film along with the deadly gas which gets flushed into the soil of

continued on page 57



**JAW RIP-OUT ZOMBIE.** This puppet rig was made to match actor Brian Peck, who gets his jaw ripped-out during the course of the film.



**WORM WOMAN (Annie Marshall)** without her wig. This whole-head mask was made of latex, while the "worms" were made of hot-melt vinyl.



**THE IMPALEMENT ZOMBIE (Doug Benson)** features tendons fashioned from bits of hanging latex painted in purple hues.



**THE CROWBAR CORPSE** was actually a cable-controlled puppet worked by 12 people who articulated all facial movement.



# REVIEWS

## Paramount grasping at both ends of the axe

### FRIDAY THE 13TH— THE SERIES

A Variety Artists Ltd., Lexico Prods. & Hometown Films production. Syndicated, 10/87, 60 mins. Executive producer, Frank Mancuso, Jr. Produced by Iain Paterson & J. Miles Dale. Created by Larry B. Williams & Mancuso. Cinematographer, Rodney Charters. Editor, Gary L. Smith. Music, Frank Mullin. Production designer, Carol Spier. Special effects, Frank Carere.

Micki ..... Robey  
Ryan ..... John Le May  
Jack Marshack ..... Christopher Wiggins  
Uncle Lewis ..... R. G. Armstrong

by Lawrence Tetewsky

It really wasn't Jason who killed FRIDAY THE 13TH: THE SERIES, although he was an accessory. Ultimately, Paramount Television, in trying to grasp both ends of the axe, sabotaged this sophisticated "suspense/horror" genre entry, even before it reached the syndicated airwaves.

Series creator Frank Mancuso, Jr., was on the right track when he and co-creator Larry Williams

originally conceived the continuing story of two distant, dissimilar cousins and an eccentric collector who must retrieve cursed antiques sold from their deceased Uncle Lewis' curio shop. Their intent was to bring back to television what anthology shows like TWILIGHT ZONE, HITCHCOCK, and AMAZING STORIES failed to achieve, namely good horror and suspense, with the idea that continuing characters in weekly peril would provide an old-fashioned serial appeal.

The format allowed for a wide variety of objects to draw out the horror in people, as well as opportunities to examine the various "curses" inherent in the premise: not only the antique buyers, but cousins Ryan and Micki (John LeMay and Robey) and Lewis' friend Jack Marshak (Chris Wiggins) are all trapped in a curse of

responsibility.

What's most inconceivable is Paramount cursing its well-conceived series with the non sequitur title of FRIDAY THE 13TH. They "claimed" that they wanted a title immediately recognizable to "all fans of horror," but instead they alienated their audience. Those who wanted a moody, atmospheric, suspenseful character series would not even bother to check out *anything* named FRIDAY THE 13TH, and the viewers expecting slice-and-dice were immediately disappointed.

The pilot episode, "The Inheritance," established not only the premise and characters, but the formula and shortcomings for the series. Ryan and Micki have a bland variation of the Cybil Shepard/Bruce Willis MOONLIGHTING relationship, except that Ryan wears floral shirts and shorts, looking very nerdish. All of the subtext from the original script was sacrificed in the aired version, including details of Lewis Vandred's curse and how the cousins were fated to inherit the store and curse by his deal with the Devil. By the eighth episode, only one show had actually expanded on the premise—the "Halloween" episode featured the return of Uncle Lewis from the dead, in an attempt to trick his way out of purgatory by cavalierly sacrificing Ryan and Micki. While this episode changed their perceptions of Lewis, it didn't really affect their commitment to undoing the curse. Overall, the stories have little meaning to the characters or their relationships, which have hardly progressed beyond the playful bantering stage.

Production values were above average for the initial batch of segments, including detailed stop-motion vines that strangled their victims, and a chillingly cast, articulated Cupid statue. Cost overruns forced Paramount to suspend production temporarily until a major revision in the budget would allow them to finish off the season's commitment of episodes for a full syndication package. The later episodes have fewer effects and more emphasis on the possessed antique owner stalking his or her intended victims. □



A rock singer transforms into a bag of bones in "Cup of Time," an episode of FRIDAY THE 13TH—THE SERIES.

## Meanwhile, FRIDAY THE 13TH at the movies lumbers on

Paramount Pictures is scheduled to open FRIDAY THE 13TH—PART VII May 13. The film began shooting January 8, under a cloak of secrecy in Orange county, California, starring Kane Hodder, with a script by Kevin Heaney. Paramount keeps the filming of each new entry in the series under wraps because they shoot the pictures cheaply, non-union, even though the company is a union signatory. Paramount uses a technicality to avoid the cost of union crews by designating the project as a negative pick-up, produced independently of the studio. Since such legal niceties often go unappreciated by out-of-work union filmmakers who could picket and shut down a production, Paramount doesn't trumpet their FRIDAY THE 13TH filmings.

The new entry in the series is being directed by low-budget makeup maestro John Carl Buechler, who directed TROLL and CELLAR DWELLER for

Empire. Buechler was quoted in our last issue as saying: "I've never done a slasher picture and I never want to do one." Despite appearances to the contrary, apparently Buechler hasn't had a change of heart. Though Buechler declined to comment on his latest career move through spokesman John Foster, who cited Paramount's gag order on all publicity, Foster assured us that Buechler

Jason is due back on May 13th.



was a man of his word.

Said Foster, "Buechler told Paramount, 'I'll do this, but I don't want to do a slasher film.' Explained Foster, "This is like FRANKENSTEIN. Jason still has a goalie mask, but he's a lot worse for wear." Buechler's Mechanical and Makeup Imageries company is also supplying the film's makeup and special effects.

But with their FRIDAY THE 13TH TV series ongoing, why does Paramount want to bring Jason back to the theatres? It could be the more than \$78 million the series has earned for the studio, a fantastic return if you consider Paramount's relatively small investment in the series' bare bones production costs.

The original film in the series, directed by Sean Cunningham in 1980, earned Paramount more than \$17 million, the most successful so far. The least successful was 1986's PART VI, which still returned about \$9.5 million to Paramount. □



## The Unmaking of FRIDAY THE 13TH —THE SERIES

By Gary Kimber

The long-running and hugely successful FRIDAY THE 13TH motion picture series spawned this television off-shoot of 26 syndicated episodes. Though the quality of the show is abysmal, the series has actually been renewed by producer Paramount Pictures for next year. The sub-par episodes aired the first year were the result of a production troubled by behind-the-scenes casualties that more than matched the on-screen mayhem, particularly in the key area of special effects.

Shooting began last year in late May at the CFTO studios in Agincourt, Ontario, a suburb of Toronto. Serving as executive producer was Frank Mancuso, Jr., whose prior work has included stints as executive producer on FRIDAY THE 13TH PART 6, producer of Parts 3, 4 and 5 and associate producer of Part 2. Mancuso explained why he chose a cast of continuing characters rather than an anthology format. "The anthology was colder, less emotional than the serial format," he said.

Unlike the movies which specialized in dispatching teenage and authority figure victims in increasingly inventive and stomach-churning ways, the series went easy on blood and guts. "There are some sliit

The leads exchange comic banter in a bland effort to emerge as a kind of horror take-off on MOONLIGHTING.



Supernatural sleuths Robey (l), Christopher Wiggins and John D. LeMay (r), seek a sinister guest at a costume party in "Halloween," the episode on which veteran Hammer director Peter Sasdy was given the axe during filming in Toronto.

throats, beatings and murders," said Megan Hope-Ross, its visual effects coordinator, "but it's mostly done off-camera. It's not dwelt on like in the movies."

Others in the series' small but effective effects crew were John Gajdecki, Bruce Turner, Nikki Beasley, and John D'Eall, who switched from full time to a consultative basis. Originally Michael Lennick, who previously worked on David Cronenberg's THE DEAD ZONE and VIDEO-DROME as supervisor of video and optical special effects, was hired to work on effects by Ian Patterson, the series' producer. "Patterson contacted me in April about some needed solutions to effects problems," said Lennick. "Initially he was talking about a limited consultative basis. What he had in mind at that time was that there would be four or five effects shots in one show, then none the next."

Unfortunately for Lennick that is not the way the production proceeded. Working under intense pressure and with an inadequate budget of just \$8-9000 per show, including salaries, the number of effects called for in the scripts coming up from L.A. and subsequent revisions required upwards of 40 shots with 20 being about average. According to Lennick, the effects were shot in 35mm but edited on video at CFTO studios on a relatively new piece of video assembly machinery

called the *kaleidoscope*.

"A certain amount of experimentation was going on since no one had used one of these before," said Lennick. "Six hours were booked on the kaleidoscope per show, with one hour set aside per shot. Now, with each show averaging 15-20 effects shots and the equipment costing \$700-800 an hour, it's easy to see how much work and money we were putting in. One hundred hour weeks were not uncommon." Going over budget on effects as well as in other departments turned out to be a regular occurrence on the show.

Lennick left the show of his own volition after just four episodes during an early hiatus in production, due to the extremely long hours he was putting in with an inexperienced (though talented) crew for what, he felt, was inadequate compensation. "I got the distinct impression near the end," he said, "that the feeling was growing we were getting paid exactly what we were worth, so we should stop complaining."

Effects coordinator Megan Hope-Ross had been brought in to liaison with the various departments to insure that lines of communication kept running smoothly. Lennick said she was "bored stiff by effects films" and called them "flying plastic." Nevertheless, Lennick said, he "begged her to come on board to help him out." And they say

politics makes strange bed-fellows.

In addition to Lennick leaving the show under somewhat less than cordial circumstances there was the case of Al Magliochetti, whose most recent handiwork can be seen in Frank Henenlotter's BRAIN DAMAGE. Magliochetti left the show about the same time as Lennick, and cited similar problems. "It's turned into a complete piece of garbage," he said of the show. A large part of the problem, he opined, was that "Frank Mancuso, Jr., wanted an effects show while producer Ian Paterson did not." This lack of a clear understanding between the show's guiding hands created confusion and frustration among the lead effects technicians.

Despite attaining good early ratings numbers and some fair reviews the enterprise could not be termed a "happy set." After having nearly completed an episode titled "Halloween" noted Hammer horror director Peter Sasdy was quietly taken aside during a lunch break, with driver standing at the ready and escorted off the premises. Mancuso, Jr., admitted that he hired and he fired. "We had some creative differences over the common look of the show which could not be ironed out," said Mancuso, who took sole responsibility for Sasdy's abrupt firing. □



*Surprisingly potent fable makes us squirm in unexpected ways*

**FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC**

A New World Pictures and Fries Entertainment presentation of a Charles Fries production, in association with Mark Ratering. 11/87, 95 mins. In color. Director, Jeffrey Bloom. Producers, Sy Levin & Thomas Fries. Executive producers, Charles Fries & Mike Rosenfeld. Directors of photography, Frank Byers & Gil Hubbs. Editor, Gregory F. Plotts. Production designer, John Muto. Special effects supervisor, Dick Albain. Set designer, Michele Starbuck. Costume designer, Ann Somers Major. Music, Christopher Young. Sound, Arnold Braun. Assistant director, Peter S. Gries. Screenplay by Jeffrey Bloom.

Grandmother	..... Louise Fletcher
Corinne	..... Victoria Tennant
Cathy	..... Kristy Swanson
Chris	..... Jeb Stuart Adams
Cory	..... Ben Ganger
Carrie	..... Lindsay Parker
Father	..... Marshall Colt
Grandfather	..... Nathan Davis
John Hall	..... Alex Koba

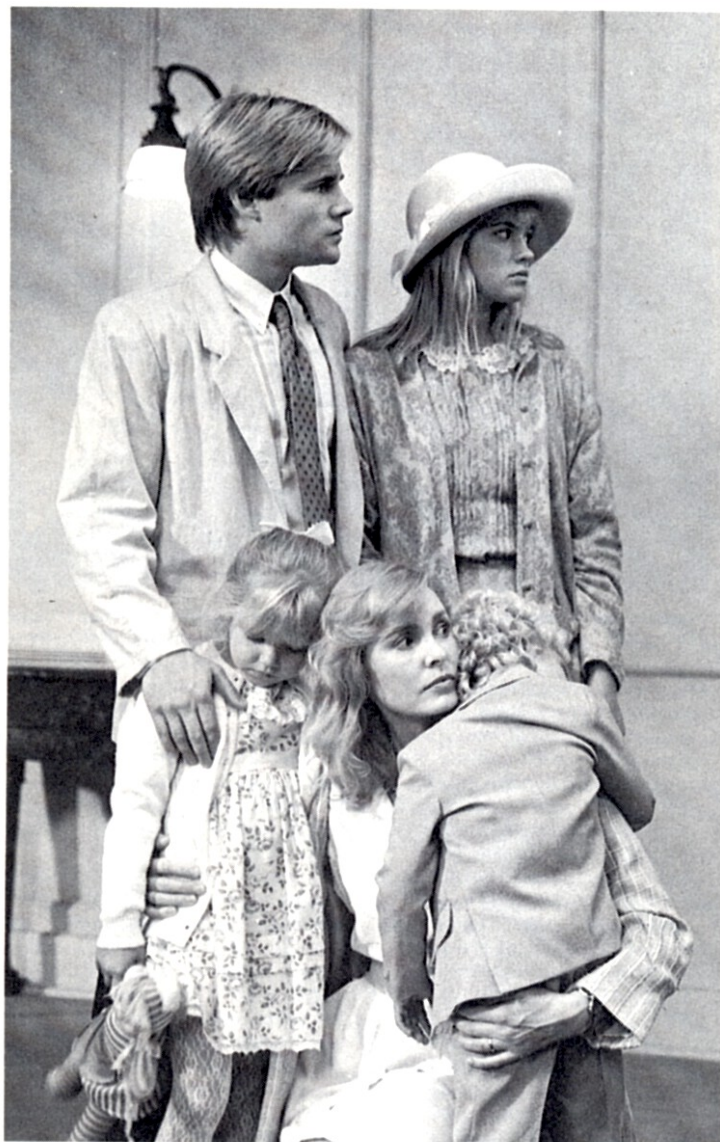
by Harry McCracken

Screenwriter/director Jeffrey Bloom, given the unenviable task of filming V.C. Andrews' best-seller, *Flowers in the Attic*, has succeeded a bit too well. Despite some fiddling with the plot, the novel's bizarre premise, unearthly dialogue, and most of its numerous lurid excesses have been brought to the screen intact. This movie is almost as kitschy as the book that inspired it.

But give Bloom his due: the movie also retains much of what is good about Andrews' story. Despite the well-deserved PG-13 rating, the movie is a fairy tale—a surprisingly potent one that makes us squirm in some unexpected ways.

The story is that of the Dollangangers, a blue-eyed, blond-haired family that gets thrust into horror when Dad (Marshall Colt) is killed in a car accident. Left penniless, the rest of the family—widow Corinne (Victoria Tennant), teens Cathy (Kristy Swanson) and Chris (Jeb Stuart Adams), and prepubescent twins Carrie and Cory (Lindsay Parker and Ben Ganger)—are left with no choice but to move in with Corinne's wealthy parents. Corinne isn't exactly welcomed home with open arms; indeed, she had been disowned years before, because her husband was also her cousin. Her father (Nathan Davis), bedridden and on the brink of death, doesn't even know he has grandchildren; her mother (a badly miscast Louise Fletcher) is a Bible-thumping, certifiable nutcase who considers her daughter's offspring the spawn of hell. (So why are they allowed into the house at all? The movie never says.)

The four children end up being locked in a bedroom and adjoin-



Victoria Tennant gives a chilling performance of maternal love gone evil, with (clockwise) Lindsay Parker, Jeb Stuart Adams, Kristy Swanson, Ben Ganger.

ing attic—temporarily, Corinne tells them, until she can win back her father's affections and be rewritten into his will. At first, the young Dollangangers adjust well to their confinement; the long-unused attic turns out to be a wonderful world to explore, and Chris and Cathy prove excellent parents-by-proxy to the twins.

But as the weeks pass, Corinne's visits to the attic, once frequent and joyous, become rare and distant; eventually, even the deliveries of food become erratic. The children's optimism crumbles into desperation. Moreover, Chris and Cathy, isolated from others of their own age, become lovers. (The book is explicit about this, pre-

sumably accounting for at least part of its popularity; the film merely leaves strong hints.)

Lack of nourishment and medical attention leads to general ill health, and after a bout with pneumonia, Cory dies. When aspiring doctor Chris performs an amateur autopsy, he makes an unspeakable discovery: the real cause of death was a poison cookie left by Corinne.

FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC tries awfully hard to be a psychological thriller, but, like the book, it's too stylistically rudimentary to work on that level. Bloom's direction is heavy on odd angles and striking images, but the fancy camerawork rarely seems to have

much connection with what's on-screen. His screenplay's dialogue is a fair approximation of Andrews' prose style—which means it sounds little like anything ever emitted by a human being.

The characterizations, too, reek of artificiality. Adams and Swanson can't really be blamed for their failure to bring Chris and Cathy to life; their unorthodox lifestyle doesn't prevent the four Dollanganger children from being four slices of white bread who wouldn't feel out of place as members of the Brady Bunch. Chris has but two character traits: he wants to be a doctor, and his reverence for his mother is unshakable. Cathy and the twins are not blessed with that much depth of personality.

Despite everything, FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC gets under your skin. Slowly and methodically—and without any traditional horror-movie shocks or much effects work—the movie constructs an atmosphere of deep unpleasantness. An early sequence, in which Corinne removes her blouse in front of her dying father so that her mother can horsewhip her, then again to display her welts to her children, is disturbing in more ways than one can easily count, and representative of the movie's flavor.

The film's most piercing horror comes from Corinne's treatment of her children; a mother's abandonment of her young is surely among the most primal, universal fears imaginable. Victoria Tennant's performance makes Corinne's transmogrification from loving mom to infanticidal demon seamless and plausible; the revelation that she's trying to do in the kids hits us as hard as it does them. In this virtual catalogue of familial relationships gone awry, Chris and Cathy's liaison, astonishingly enough, is one of the least mixed-up ones.

The chords that this story strikes are deep and resonant; it's a shame it hits them so clumsily. The film's best sequence is one of the last ones, in which the wraith-like surviving Dollanganger children escape the attic and confront their mother—during the high-society wedding ceremony at which she's about to be remarried. This scene, perversely funny and yet genuinely unsettling, eloquently accomplishes what the rest of FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC never quite does. □



## Jeffrey Bloom on directing FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC

By Sheldon Teitelbaum

While not matching the power of the late V. C. Andrews' horror novel, *FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC* was, for the most part, a faithful and sensitive translation of Andrews' book to the screen sadly marred by a stupid, incongruous ending mandated by studio executives (18:1:38). In the altered ending, murdering mother Victoria Tennant is hung by her own wedding dress. The film's writer and director, Jeffrey Bloom, wouldn't talk about the way the film was taken out of his hands and altered, but friends and associates said Bloom regarded what was done as "a terribly insensitive brutalization of his work."

Bloom said he approached *FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC* like it was a fairy tale, delivering a message. "I think it's saying that when you've come of age in any situation, you'll find that the door is open and the way out is clear," he said. "The story is about these kids who are locked in a house that is very difficult to get out of—the doors are locked, the windows inaccessible, dogs patrolling the place. But as far as I'm concerned, they could have left at any time."

In fact, in Bloom's first draft of the script, Jeb Adams, who plays older brother Chris, returns from a foraging mission in the house and reports to his sister Cathy, played by Kristy Swanson, that the front door is open. Clearly, the children had only to recognize their predicament for what it was in order to leave.

But when Bloom presented his script to production executives at Fries Entertainment, they objected to this particular plot twist. "They said, 'You can't just have a door open,'" Bloom recalled. "These kids have gone through all kinds of hell trying to



Director Jeffrey Bloom

get out. I insisted that it had to be that way—I just couldn't say why until three months later, when it hit me that this was what the book was all about."

In adapting the book, Bloom instituted a number of plot changes. He compressed the 30-month span outlined in the novel to a mere season, extending from April to October. "If you look carefully—though, who will?—you can tell," Bloom said. "We took great pains with what they were wearing, with the color of the leaves, whatever we could within the limits of a small movie."

And, in the interest of filmic pacing, other scenes depicted in the book were either shifted or dropped. The only plot change Bloom believes is entirely gratuitous involves a character included because it was a dealbreaker—the film would not have been made without this character whose superfluosity, Bloom asserted, became evident even to the young audience that saw the first cut.

The trouble really began when executives at Fries and distributor New World Pictures tried to

turn Andrews' psychological horror into a more overt shocker. "Fries and New World simply never realized," said Bloom, "that there's an enormous audience already out there of women who will come to see a woman's movie. They'll bring their boyfriends and girlfriends along, and we'll all do nicely. We could have made a movie on that level and it could have worked."

Bloom left the production thinking the movie played "about 90% faithful to the book," he said. "It looked rich, it was consistent, didn't compromise itself, and was bizarre. In a way, it was like an old-fashioned movie, a little operatic. But it's no *BLUE VELVET* by any means."

Bloom said a number of actresses were approached to play the role of the widowed mother but turned it down because they didn't want to play a mother who murders her children. Recalled Bloom, "We used to say, 'What ever happened to actresses? This isn't you—it's a part.'"

There were budgetary problems, too. The film required some elaborate sets—especially the larger-than-life attic, which cost a great deal to build. "We were way over budget in the art department," said Bloom, "and they just didn't want to spend above a certain amount of money," notably the \$3.5 million initially allotted for the picture.

Moreover, Bloom felt that he had not been given adequate time to prep the film, which began shooting at the end of August, 1986 and concluded in October. Nor had he and his colleagues properly taken into account the exigencies of working with children, who can only be kept on the set for eight hours a day. The result was an extra five days of shooting in



Innocents Ben Granger and Lindsay Parker, abandoned and starving, watch their mother dance at a ball.

Massachusetts, location of the film's mansion. "And we had to fight for every one," said Bloom.

"The thing about arguments," he explained, "is that there's just too much negative energy expended. You argue and yell and scream and ultimately you get what you want. But after a while there's a cumulative effect and you lose energy. By the time I got what I wanted, I didn't know what to do with it any more. I was really exhausted."

*FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC* had originally been slated for release in March, 1987. But Fries got cold feet. The company, which does brisk trade in television rather than feature motion pictures, commissioned yet another cut of the film. Reportedly, Bloom then wrote Fries indicating that either he be permitted to render the final cut of the film or he would remove himself from the project. Fries declined. Bloom responded by asking out of his contract with Fries. Fries agreed on condition that Bloom not take his name off the picture, a decision Bloom told friends he may live to regret.

Ironically, the Writers Guild had begun an arbitration to establish writer's credit for the film, and in the midst of his angst-ridden negotiations with

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In a clumsy, tacked-on ending not filmed by Bloom, a double for Victoria Tennant (who walked off the set), plunges to her death in her wedding dress after being confronted by Kristy Swanson, a shock sequence demanded by the producers.





## Beneath the surface gloss it's another Carpenter no-brainer

### PRINCE OF DARKNESS

A Universal Pictures release of an Alien Films presentation, 10/87, 101 mins. In color. Director, John Carpenter. Producer, Larry Franco. Executive producers, Shep Gordon & Andre Blay. Executive photography, Gary B. Kibbe. Editor, Steve Mirkovich. Production designer, Daniel Lomino. Set designer, Rick Gentz. Costume designer, Deahdra Scarano. Sound, Terry Porter. Assistant director, Larry Franco. Stunt coordinator, Jeff Imada. Screenplay by Martin Quatermass.

Priest	Donald Pleasence
Brian	Jameson Parker
Brack	Victor Wong
Catherine	Lisa Blount
Walter	Dennis Dun
Kelly	Susan Blanchard
Susan	Anne Howard
Lisa	Ann Yen
Lomas	Ken Wright
Mullins	Dirk Blocker
Calder	Jessie Lawrence Ferguson
Dr. Leahy	Peter Jason
Street Schizo	Alice Cooper

by Charles D. Leayman

Few devotees of the horror and science fiction genres would dispute writer-director John Carpenter's ability to fashion taut, vivid, kinetic yarns that shimmer with terror and realized threat (and occasionally, as in *STAR-MAN*, with unexpected pathos). Customary use of a wide-screen format allows his tensely fluid camera-eye to prowl deftly through spaces open to attack from every side. His control of what the French call *mise en scene* (camera movement, editing, composition, color, pace) is unobtrusively assured. Even outright pulp like *PRINCE OF DARKNESS* unduly

Carpenter stand-by Donald Pleasence as the Catholic priest: a scenario more blasphemous than Godard's *HAIL MARY*.



benefits from his knack for making "movies" that actually move. But along with the man's technical prowess goes a consistent inability (or refusal) to confront his plots' thematic implications. Unlike such intuitively self-conscious auteurs as George Romero and David Cronenberg, Carpenter unabashedly favors the "how" over the "what."

Credited to one "Martin Quatermass" (the director's alleged, and coy pseudonym), *PRINCE OF DARKNESS*'s screenplay concerns a secret society of Catholic clerics called the Brotherhood of Sleep, who for 2000 years have stood guard over the earthly remains of Satan. Encased within a tall cylindrical jar filled with glowing, Oz-green liquid, and sequestered in the basement of an abandoned Los Angeles church, His Satanic Majesty begins to emit signs of imminent escape. A mixed group of physicists, paranormal experts and computer whizzes, along with a Catholic priest (Carpenter stand-by Donald Pleasence), convene to monitor the demon's stepped-up activity. But once inside the church they find themselves unable to escape, besieged from without by lethal "street people" and omnivorous insects, and attacked from within by showers of greenish goo that turn the unlucky recipients into maddened zombies.

Cued to the compulsive rhythms of Carpenter and Alan Howarth's electro-blip score, *PRINCE OF DARKNESS* moves with the charged momentum that one expects from the filmmaker who made *HALLOWEEN* a nightmare gloss on the children's Walpurgisnacht sequence in Minnelli's *MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS*. Strikingly arranged character groupings, isolated set-pieces (particularly a lone scientist's demise under the knife in an empty lot), and the overall tone of rampant hysteria, attest to Carpenter's being awake at the switch.

Unfortunately, very little is really happening, at least not much that's original or sharply developed. Pleasence and Victor Wong (from *BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA*) banter shaggy-dog metaphysics about Good vs. Evil, "this side of the mirror" vs.



Welcome to Carpenter's nightmare: rocker Alice Cooper leads the street zombies.

"the Other side," but the story's central conceit remains stubbornly unfocused. It has something to do with Jesus Christ's being an extraterrestrial who comes to subdue the embodiment of "natural" Evil; the Catholic Church subsequently emerges to conceal from the human race Satan's all too material reality. The bottom line is that Good is on the perpetual defensive.

(Speaking of religion, those believers who consider Jean-Luc Godard's *HAIL MARY* to be the nadir of blasphemy have obviously not attended to what recent horror movies have to say on the subject. *PRINCE OF DARKNESS*, *RAWH-HEAD REX*, and *HELLO, MARY LOU: PROM NIGHT II* are but the latest in a series of films which conspire, to a greater or lesser degree, to undermine religious dogma, especially Catholicism. These films evoke a contemporary crisis of faith far more radical than was experienced in the '60s, when the concept of "God" still seemed somehow valid and roughly attainable via acid or herbs, fasting or meditation.)

More suggestive than the metaphysical twaddle is the film's undigested social commentary. "Street people," for example (i.e., the socially dispossessed, whether "bag ladies," "bums," or "winos"), have naggingly haunted American movies throughout the declining years of Reagan's administration, from Nick Nolte's tramp-savior in *DOWN AND OUT IN BEVERLY HILLS* to the accusatory "Skid Row" number from *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS*. Carpenter's casting of ex-cult-rocker Alice Cooper lends a surreal edge to the malevolent have-nots of *PRINCE OF DARKNESS*, but ascribing their murder-

ous resentment to Satanic possession reaffirms a mindlessly popular prejudice: to wit, those who can't succeed in Reagan's America don't really deserve to. (A similar phobia underwrote Carpenter's depiction of ethnic assassins in *ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13*.)

In addition, the movie emits a very sour subtext wherein women and blacks comprise the principal deviants from a white-male-centered universe. Susan Blanchard's Kelly (sporting bloody-putty makeup reminiscent of Laurie Mitchell's *QUEEN OF OUTER SPACE*) becomes chief incubator for the demon, seducing her female companions into involuntary compliance (thus the passing frisson of lesbianism). This gives the film's Wonder Bread hero (Jameson Parker) and his friends the chance to punch women in the face and hurl them out the window. Meanwhile, the film's main black character blubbers before Satan's mirror-threshold, seeming to mourn the loss of his "masculinity" to the massed wiles of Woman-cum-Demon. Lisa Blount's climactic self-sacrifice hardly corrects the sexist arithmetic: substituting Woman for an emasculated Christianity still leaves the film's paranoid-male world intact (albeit precariously). (An eerily lovely shot of Blount groping toward the mirror's surface as she sinks into the darkness of its "Other side" recalls the equally nightmarish climax of Robert Fuest's *THE DEVIL'S RAIN*.)

For all its celluloid vitality, *PRINCE OF DARKNESS* ultimately exemplifies John Carpenter's (inadvertent or blatant) disavowal of his technically slick project's questionable assumptions. □



# Spielberg's cheerful flip-side to the ALIEN look of H. R. Giger

## BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED

A Universal Pictures release from Amblin Entertainment. 12/87. 106 mins. In Dolby & color. Director, Matthew Robbins. Producer, Ronald L. Schwarz. Executive producers, Steven Spielberg, Kathleen Kennedy & Frank Marshall. Director of photography, John McPherson. Editor, Cynthia Scheider. Production designer, Ted Haworth. Art director, Angelo Graham. Visual effects, Industrial Light & Magic. Set designer, George R. Nelson. Costume designer, Aggie Guerard Rodgers. Music, James Horner. Sound, Gene Cantamessa. Assistant director, Jerry Grandey. Second unit director, Joe Johnston. Screenplay by Matthew Robbins.

Frank ..... Hume Cronyn  
 Faye ..... Jessica Tandy  
 Harry ..... Frank McRae  
 Merisa ..... Elizabeth Pena  
 Carlos ..... Michael Carmine  
 Mason ..... Dennis Boutsikaris

by Harry McCracken

The numbing predictability of **BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED** begins with its very existence: of course Steven Spielberg was going to make a movie about adorable flying saucers sooner or later. As with so many episodes of **AMAZING STORIES**—this premise was conceived for that show—the most startling thing about this film is its timidity. Almost every aspect is prefabricated, foreshadowed, and otherwise removed of the element of surprise; it's like having your meat cut up for you.

For the first ten minutes or so, the movie looks like it might depart markedly from the standard Spielberg template. The setting is a run-down tenement building on a decaying New York City block, and there isn't a lovable youngster in sight. As the film opens, a young hoodlum-for-hire is driving the building's tenants out of their homes to make way for a luxury development project. The violence with which he does this is at first jarring.

It's quickly evident, though, that this slum can't be very far



Jessica Tandy rescues a cute baby saucer from the soup pot in her diner.

away from the idyllic suburbia of other Spielberg movies. The mood, as usual, turns out to be slightly updated Norman Rockwell, and the victimized tenants—an irascible old coffee shop proprietor (Hume Cronyn) and his addled wife (Jessica Tandy), an aspiring painter, a pregnant, unwed young woman, and a mostly mute ex-prizefighter, are merely inner city versions of familiar Spielberg types. This disparate bunch is brought together by their tenement eviction, and the screenplay, with assembly line efficiency, provides each of them with individual problems as well.

Salvation comes whizzing inevitably through the window, in the form of anthropomorphic husband-and-wife miniature flying saucers. The saucers, whose not very well-defined power lets them neatly solve the most pressing of

the tenement dwellers' predicaments, are brought to life by ILM special effects at their most winsome. Cuter still are the three baby saucers whom Mrs. Saucer gives birth to after a romantic evening on the building's rooftop. These interplanetary visitors' antics provide most of the film's considerable good humor, particularly in a scene in which the infant saucers interfere with Cronyn's coffee shop operations. The scene plays like a hilarious animated cartoon that has somehow been filmed in live-action. (No wonder; co-screenwriter Brad Bird is a Disney alumnus and director of the excellent animated "Family Dog" episode of **AMAZING STORIES**).

Director Matthew Robbins, whose **DRAGONSLAYER** was one of the more under-appreciated film fantasies of recent years, gives the film the *de rigueur* Spielbergesque visuals, but with a generally restrained and low-key tone; the movie is only flashy when it needs to be. The night-time arrival of the saucers into the building, which alternates the point of view between Tandy and the saucers is especially well-staged. We get to share both sides' inquisitiveness about the other.

Robbins also receives likeable, if uncomplicated, performances from most of the cast, particularly Elizabeth Pena as the unwed mother-to-be, and by Frank McRae as the big ex-boxer who speaks in TV catch-phrases. Old pros, Cronyn and Tandy, get the best parts, and make the most of them. Cronyn's crusty coffee shop owner turns a character who

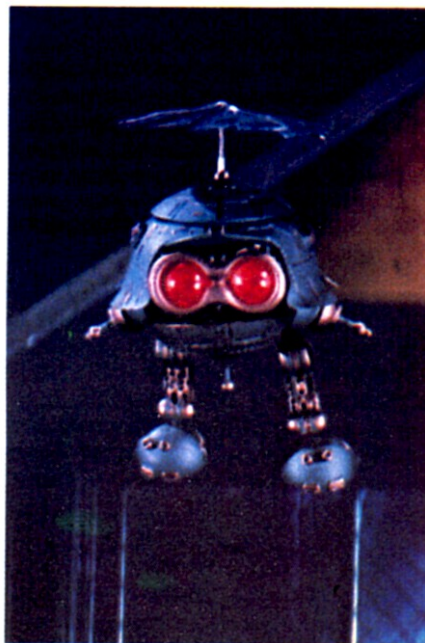
might have been a stereotype into a real, wonderfully irritable old geezer who gives the movie its only real edge. As his wife, who has never quite understood that their only son died in a car crash years ago, Tandy's performance seems at first an uneasy attempt to extract humor from Alzheimer's disease. But her eventual recognition of the tragedy gives the film its most genuinely touching moment—and one that has nothing to do with flying saucers.

Noting that ILM effects work here is outstanding may be superfluous; is it ever anything less? The saucers have a funky, old-fashioned high-tech design that's the cheerful flip-side of H. R. Giger's **ALIEN** look. They perform the script's clever pantomime gags with a nimbleness and a comic timing that would be admirable in a human actor; at times, you get the feeling that they're longing for a story that would provide them with more challenging roles. Indeed, the fact that they're not nearly as well integrated into the plot as into the live-action footage is the movie's key disappointment.

The movie's gentle, likeable flavor isn't phony, just woefully underdeveloped. The saucer family's appearance on earth goes unexplained, their relationship with building tenants remains

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Saucer designs by Ralph McQuarrie and Paul Huston evoke the cheerful flip-side of H. R. Giger's biomechanical look.



Baby saucers were winningly animated for ILM by stop-motion expert David Allen.





## Tom McLoughlin on directing DATE WITH AN ANGEL

By Taylor White

Angels have long been a standard in fantasy films, but most filmmakers have opted to portray the celestial beings in human form rather than with feathered wings, glowing halos and lily white robes. "It was always a guy in a business suit," said Tom McLoughlin, writer and director of DEG's DATE WITH AN ANGEL, referring to the custom-tailored angels of the '40s—like Cary Grant's sharp-dressed Dudley in THE BISHOP'S WIFE.

For his own rendering of the classic angel-on-earth theme, McLoughlin chose to make his title character an ethereal feminine beauty, adorned with wings and appropriately robed in white instead of tweed. In researching the history of on-screen angels, McLoughlin found only sparse appearances by the winged brand, restricted mainly to dream sequences, like that in Charlie Chaplin's THE KID. "I really did my homework," he said. "I particularly wanted to create an angel because it was something I'd never seen."

No stranger to the genre, McLoughlin wrote and directed ONE DARK NIGHT and FRIDAY THE 13TH: PART VI and penned

**Puppeteering Beart's wings for a blue-screen effects shot at Richard Edlund's Boss Film: wonders on a low budget.**



Angel Emmanuelle Beart, shooting the SNOW WHITE scene at the DeLaurentiis studios in Wilmington, North Carolina.

two of the more watchable episodes of AMAZING STORIES—the Robert Zemeckis directed "Go to the Head of the Class," co-written with Mick Garris, and "Such Interesting Neighbors," adapted from a Jack Finney short story. He also appeared in front of the camera as a robot in SLEEPER, the Jabberwocky in Irwin Allen's tele-version of ALICE IN WONDERLAND, as the notorious "Pizza Bear" in PROPHECY, and as robot Captain Starr in THE BLACK HOLE.

Bringing DATE WITH AN ANGEL to light proved long and arduous. "It was literally a seven year process getting the film to the screen," said McLoughlin. "The doors were constantly being closed in my face mainly because Hollywood saw it as a silly piece of fluff. I followed through on this thing because I really wanted to see this movie myself."

The project passed through a number of hands, including producer Stephen Deutsch, Joel and Michael Douglas, and on to Ron Howard and Anson Williams, who developed it as a feature for The Disney Channel, with Scott Baio set to star. The project was nixed when SPLASH opened, bearing a vaguely similar motif, leaving McLoughlin's script to be unfairly labeled "a rip-off." Disheartened with the continual rejection, McLoughlin found encouragement from Frank

Capra, a likely source of inspiration who offered advice, reminding the director to "Keep at it" and to make sure his lead had that "good guy" quality. The script finally landed in the hands of DEG producer Martha Schumacher, who instantly "fell in love with it."

Finding an actress with the right qualifications to embody an angel proved equally frustrating for McLoughlin. "I felt I needed to find a lady who could convey a sense of wonder and child-like innocence, but at the same time have a sexiness and sensuality about her and an expressiveness that really came through her being, the way a child communicates," he said. As an experienced

mime who formed the celebrated L. A. Mime Company, McLoughlin understood the importance of obtaining an actress who could be expressive in a non-verbal sense, since his angel had virtually no lines of dialogue until the film's final scene.

After criss-crossing the U.S. several times to look at what McLoughlin estimated were five thousand actresses, he found his angel during a business trip to Paris when he saw Emmanuelle Beart, a radiant blond French actress. Beart's only screen credit was MANON OF THE SPRING, a film which earned her a prestigious Cesar (the French Academy Award). "It was the casting

McLoughlin works out angel movement with Beart, seated on a special camera rig.





## Heavenly gem deserves rediscovery on video

### DATE WITH AN ANGEL

A DeLaurentis Entertainment Group presentation, in association with DeLaurentis Film Partners. 11/87, 105 mins. In color & Dolby. Director, Tom McLoughlin. Producer, Martha Schumacher. Director of photography, Alex Thomson. Editor, Marshall Harvey. Production designer, Graig Stearns. Art director, Jeffrey S. Ginn. Visual effects supervisor, Richard Edlund. Set designer, Randy Moore. Costume designer, Donna O'Neal. Music, Randy Kerber. Sound, Gary Bourgeois, Dean Okrand & Chris Carpenter. Assistant director, Bruce Moriarty. Screenplay by Tom McLoughlin.

Jim Sanders	.....	Michael E. Knight
Patty Winston	.....	Phoebe Cates
Angel	.....	Emmanuelle Beart
Ed Winston	.....	David Dukes
George	.....	Phil Brock
Don	.....	Albert Macklin
Rev	.....	Pete Kowanko
Ben Sanders	.....	Vinny Argiro
Grace Sanders	.....	Bibi Besch

by Taylor L. White

If you like old-fashioned sweetness and unabashed innocence, this film deserves your warm embrace of recognition after being shunned at the boxoffice late last year. *DATE WITH AN ANGEL*, scripted and directed by Tom McLoughlin, is a refreshing, fanciful fable about a winged, white-robed beauty from Heaven (Emmanuelle Beart) who, while enroute to retrieve a human soul, gets smacked by a satellite and lands in the swimming pool of a handsome musician (Michael Knight). The angel turns Knight's life upside down as he prepares to marry a spoiled socialite (Phoebe Cates) who is understandably miffed about her fiance's new houseguest.

With its endearing sense of lighthearted comedy and fantasy, the film makes no bones about its heritage. McLoughlin consciously mixes all the ingredients which made similar-themed fantasies of the '30s and '40s so affecting and timeless. Yet McLoughlin has kept a firm grip on the sugar bowl, never letting his movie get overly sappy or sentimental. Without the presence of contemporary rock music and updated fashion styles, this film could easily be sandwiched between *IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE* (1946) and *THE BISHOP'S WIFE* (1948).

Despite its nostalgic nature, the film takes advantage of '80s movie technology without losing its warmth and shine to become top-heavy with obtrusive visuals. The effects by Richard Edlund's Boss Film are striking and enhance the proceedings without taking center stage. The mechanical wing effects are entirely believable—no small feat compared to past attempts, such as those of John Philip Law's blind angel in *BARBARELLA*.

equivalent of love at first sight," said McLoughlin. "Beart had the natural ability to communicate in much the same way as Lillian Gish and Mary Pickford acted in the silents."

To achieve the film's extensive visual effects, including the angel in flight and her mechanical wings, Richard Edlund's Boss Film group was hired, appropriately labeled "The Rolls Royce of Special Effects" by McLoughlin. "Richard Edlund did this a lot as a labor of love," said McLoughlin, in reference to the film's limited budget of \$8.3 million.

The main effect to make believable was the wings. "I wanted the wings to be an extension, like another set of arms, something that had a flexibility and a way of being expressive," said McLoughlin. With this particular effect, Edlund and his crew were dipping into brand new territory. "It took a lot of meetings, a lot of sketching out and discussions," recalled the director. The process of creating the appendages went through an entire series of attempts. "They'd spend two weeks putting a whole set of wings together and we'd realize the feathers were going the wrong way. We wanted to keep the reality of the way birds' wings worked."

To achieve the effect, real feathers were worked in with feathers created from flexible plastic. "Very tricky," said McLoughlin. Some experimentations were deemed "too alien" and "too gimmicky, like something Liberace would have worn," he said.

The crew finally settled on an assortment of wings manufactured for each particular situation. Originally molded to fit an actress standing 5'10", the wings had to be revamped when Beart, standing a petite 5'3", was cast just two weeks before shooting was to begin. "She looked like a French mosquito," laughed McLoughlin. "We thought we were going to have to get a double because the wings were very heavy and she was a pretty frail little thing. To give a performance and not have the weight of that thing bogging you down is difficult. Emmanuelle was an incredible sport about the whole thing."

In the original script, McLoughlin had envisioned his own "angelspeak," a unique language communicated by the angel, conveying a strong sense of emotion. In researching the language, he listened to and compared a number of contrast-

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Angelic Emmanuelle Beart. How could audiences fail to be charmed?

The movements are graceful and smooth, not stilted.

Much of the film's success rests on the shoulders (or wings) of angel Emmanuelle Beart, whose ethereal beauty and uncanny ability to express a wide range of emotion without the benefit of dialogue makes for a stunning, mesmerizing performance. Upon her first appearance in Knight's pool, one instantly forgets that this is a flesh and blood actress mounted with mechanical wings. Especially powerful is a mock death scene near the film's conclusion in which the angel, having mended her broken wing, fulfills her purpose for coming to earth as Knight lies unconscious on a hospital bed.

Upon its ill-timed holiday release by DEG late last year, *DATE WITH AN ANGEL* met with surprising vehemence from film critics who failed to find favor with the picture's upbeat effervescence and optimism. And as a litmus test for the jaded tastes of contemporary moviegoers, the film showed that audiences now prefer their fantasies dished up cold, like so much raw meat, spiced with violence and mayhem. But if McLoughlin's film follows the lead of its heavenly predecessors, many of which also failed commercially in their initial release, it may, God and angels willing, someday turn up as the perennial favorite it deserves to be. □



## THE TROUBLE WITH DICK

### Shooting science fiction on a low budget

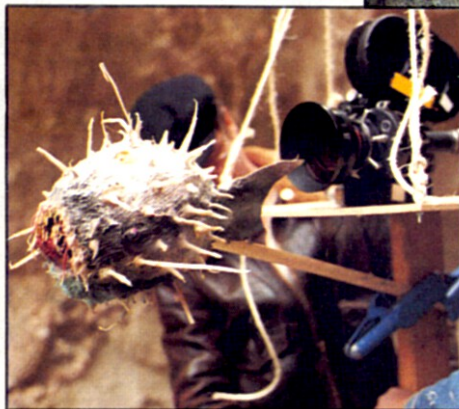
By Sheldon Teitelbaum

Two weeks before he was slated to direct his first feature, *THE TROUBLE WITH DICK*, Gary Walkow found himself with the proverbial curtain coming down around his ears. His star was backing out because he thought that the film would look "cheesy," in the unlikely event that it was ever actually completed. And he still hadn't found a house to shoot it in.

Ironically, Walkow, a 33 year-old Texan who had worked as an editor, screenwriter and music-video director, had left little else to chance. Preproduction for this simple saga of a science fiction writer undone by a stalled career and a difficult living arrangement with three women had lasted four months. Every scene had been storyboarded, each optical and camera angle painstakingly plotted. And suddenly Walkow found himself bereft of two pivotal elements in a production already pared down to a minimal level of complexity.

Walkow's casting director, Susan Young, fresh from a seven-year stint with Norman Lear, came to the rescue. She called in actor Tom Villard, who had appeared in small parts in the TV series, *WE GOT IT MADE* and later landed a part in

Director Gary Walkow's comic book promotional campaign for the film.



Filming Lars (David Clennon) in his battle with an alien "flying fish" (inset) using a camera rig designed by Robert Augur and Jim Zarlengo to give a bird's-eye-view of the attack. The tail rudder was added to give the Arri S camera in use a smooth flight.



Eastwood's *HEARTBREAK RIDGE*. Young also scored a coup by bagging actress Susan Dey for the role of the writer's girlfriend.

With his cast squared away, the matter of finding a house came to the fore. Walkow had designed the film to use just two locations, the writer's house (needed for the bulk of filming) and a desert locale for brief science fiction scenes of the writer's fictional character. With the help of a cooperative real estate agent, Walkow found his dream house in Monrovia. The house had one hitch. The wallpaper was hideous. And so, a week before shooting, Walkow and crew set about steaming it off and repainting the interior, a service which, he said, contributed to the agent's ability to sell the place.

Walkow's film has been shown by the American Film Institute in Los Angeles and at numerous film festivals (it premiered in January, 1987 at the United States Film Festival in Park City, Utah, where it copped the grand prize). Walkow said he always wanted to make a film about a writer. When asked why he picked a science fiction writer, Walkow just pointed to a bookshelf in his small apartment in Santa Monica, lined with what appeared to be the complete works of Philip K. Dick.

Walkow stressed that he did not set out to make a movie about the late Philip K. Dick, whose work served as the

basis of *BLADERUNNER*, although references to him abound in the film. Walkow has also optioned Dick's *Clans of the Alphane Moon* for filming. "A friend of mine told me after seeing *THE TROUBLE WITH DICK* that the desert sequence was what had been left out of *BLADERUNNER*," he said.

Walkow fashioned his film around a science fiction writer who is afraid to go outside. "That was a natural way of keeping the scope limited," he said. "I knew that if I wanted to make any movie at all, it would have to be the simplest concept imaginable and the lowest budget—something with basically four people and a house."

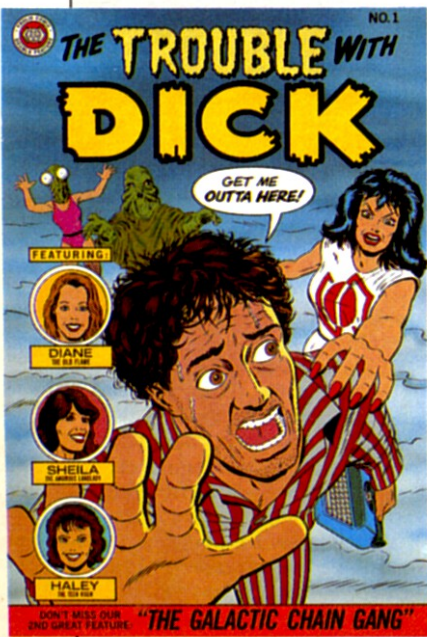
Walkow raised money for the film from relatives and friends,

and developed its story with college chum Paul Freedman. Walkow wrote the script himself—all seven drafts. To produce the film Walkow formed a partnership with Robert Augur, an art supply importer and art director for rock videos, who became the movie's executive producer.

*THE TROUBLE WITH DICK* looks as good as it does because Walkow was able not only to come up with SAG members willing to take a chance on him, but because his crew was first-rate. He said he interviewed about 100 people before settling on Albert Barosso as his line producer. "There are thousands of people in L.A. who are willing to work

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Charlie Mullin and Robert Augur prepare a low-budget desert creature.





## Comic book view of what it's like to write science fiction

### THE TROUBLE WITH DICK

A Frolix production in association with Robert Augur, coproduced by Leslie Robins. 1/87, 86 mins. In color. Produced & directed by Gary Walkow. Executive producer, Augur. Director of photography, Daryl Studebaker. Screenplay by Walkow. Editor, G. A. Walkowishky. Production design, Eric Jones, Pui Pui Li. Special effects supervisor, James Zarlengo. Costume designer, Ted Sewell. Music, Roger Bourland. Sound, George Budd. Second unit director, Bill McDonald.

Dick Kendred	Tom Villard
Diane	Susan Dey
Sheila Dibble	Elaine Giftos
Haley Gorcey	Elizabeth Gorcy
Lars	David Clennon
Samsa	Jack Carter
Betty	Marianne Muellerleile

by Sheldon Teitelbaum

The trouble with *THE TROUBLE WITH DICK* is that it's a good movie about the wrong Dick. The Dick in this picture, Dick Kendred (Tom Villard), is a science fiction writer who experiences a nervous breakdown brought on, in part, by cheesy editors and by an impossible living arrangement with a dilettante divorcee landlord, her Lolita-like daughter and a former girlfriend.

But despite a liberal peppering of references to the late, great Philip Kendred Dick, this film clearly isn't about him at all. And though you can't fault director Gary Walkow for creating a protagonist of his own or for paying homage to a writer who got little enough of it while he lived, it's hard not to see this picture, despite its obvious charm and craft, as a missed opportunity.

And make no mistake—this movie oozes with charm—no mean feat with this kind of subject. The film sets up its sources of conflict quickly and easily. And both Villard and Susan Dey make you care about the outcome. *THE TROUBLE WITH DICK* maintains a good-humoredness throughout, and is sometimes very funny.

A case in point is Jack Carter as SF editor Samsa, who tells Dick he wants "something different but also the same." He then breaks off the conversation to take a call from Sri Lanka. "Hello, Arthur," he says. "We have a bad connection." You either get the joke or you shouldn't be watching this movie. But on the other hand, the film isn't likely to score big points with SF writers despite the movie's obvious cinematic merits, which are primarily solid acting and high production values.

If you're going to make a film about an SF writer's bout with

madness, Philip Dick is your man. Accounts of his last years suggest that by the time Dick was writing his final novels, his grasp of reality had become as tenuous as that of the characters he had fashioned. This was a man who not only spoke with God—he featured him in one of his novels.

Barry Malzberg's essay collection, *The Engines of the Night* describes at some length the vile existence of the SF writer prior to this, for some, inordinately lucrative decade. Not that long ago, Malzberg recalled, the average SF writer could expect to make about \$5000 a novel. Or perhaps 5 cents a word top rate in one of the magazines. He could anticipate being ignored by the critics, disdained or exploited by academics, and hung out to dry by editors and publishers. This state of affairs, said Malzberg, killed some, crazed others, and made the survivors an insufferably prickly lot.

I digress because Malzberg's book clearly documents the manifold pressures facing the people who write SF for a living. Yet the writer in Walkow's film, this sweet-faced Dick Kendred (I defy anyone to skim the pages of *The Faces of Science Fiction* and come up with even a pair of sweet faces), is pushed over the edge by a *menage a quatre* that is about as likely an event in the life of a struggling SF writer as winning a million-dollar contract on the first outing.

Put simply, with a world of real



Director Gary Walkow and one of the film's low-budget planet creatures.

problems to pick from, why bother with silly ones. There is a moment in this movie where a pre-L. A. LAW, post-PARTRIDGE FAMILY Susan Dey asks a troubled Dick what's brought on his breakdown. "Pressure," he replies. But he can't say what kind of pressure. There is good reason for this. If the script isn't straight about what's troubling Dick, how can Dick be?

We know that Dick's career has gone into a stall. We know that he'd like to resume his relationship with Dey. And we know that both ambitions have been thwarted by his sexual involvement with Mom

and daughter Dibble. But are such pressures sufficient to kick off bouts of hallucination and free-association in an otherwise normal human being?

The thing is, of course, Dick isn't normal to begin with. We know that because the film starts with a shot of Dick's lithium prescription. In other words, it's not that the life of a science fiction writer makes you nuts. This movie says that people who are unstable to begin with gravitate toward the genre. In many instances both axioms are probably true. But neither are explored here in any depth.

Walkow peppers the film with Dick's hallucinatory visions of one of his own fictional characters, prison-planet convict Lars Shrike (David Clennon), who is attempting to escape his captors and "beam" himself elsewhere. Shrike gets his eye gouged out by a fishbird, his leg gnawed by a burrowing serpent, and his chatty zap gun goes on the blink. In the end Shrike escapes in glittering transcendence. Technically, Walkow does very well with this part of the film. But although it is supposed to mirror Dick's real-life predicament, it is too removed from anything real (in marked contrast to much recent print SF) to serve as serious commentary on anything at all, save the apparent inanity of what can justifiably be called sci-fi. In fact, after reading Dick's story, those are precisely Dey's comments in the film. □

David Clennon as Lars, the author's derring-do science fictional alter ego.





# FILM RATINGS

## BLOOD DINER

Directed by Jackie Kong. Vestron Video, 12/87, 88 mins. With: Rick Burks, Carl Crew, Lisa Guggenheim.

Another "gore for laughs" film, in the tradition of *PSYCHOS IN LOVE*. While the humor inherent in decapitations and spilled entrails may be lost on most people, this manages to work up enough goofy appeal otherwise to make it almost good. Basically a take-off on H. G. Lewis' *BLOOD FEAST*, the film has two dim-witted young men assemble a body out of murdered girls in an attempt to resurrect the Lumerian goddess Sheetar. Their irascible uncle Anwar—a brain and eyes in a jar—steals the show with his caustic commentary on their ineptitude. Well-produced but with limited appeal.

● David Wilt

## COMBAT SHOCK

Directed by Buddy Giovinazzo. Troma, Inc., 2/88. With: Ricky Giovinazzo, Veronica Stork, Mitch Maglio, Nick Nasta, Asaph Livini.

This Troma production, recalling at times the films of Abel (*DRILLER KILLER*) Ferrara, and particularly David Lynch's *ERASERHEAD*, has more neurons to rub together than their last five productions combined. Shot on a frayed shoestring on Staten Island by Buddy Giovinazzo, the film is one of the most harrowing sleepers to be released in some time.

Despite a risible *RAMBO*-style prologue (with an uncredited *ALEXANDER NEVSKY*

Bill Cosby makes fun of the secret agent genre in *LEONARD—PART 6*, but nobody laughed.



The Agent Orange mutant baby of Troma's *COMBAT SHOCK*.

score), the movie settles down to its 45-watt point-of-view of the lower depths as it charts a day in the life of a dishonorably discharged Vietnam vet (Ricky Giovinazzo) who lives in unrelieved poverty with his bitchy slattern of a wife (Linda Stork) and their hideously deformed Agent Orange mutant infant (a chilling effects creation). The movie deals with the veteran's frustrated attempts to find some dignity amid the squalor of New York street-life before culminating in a wrenching bloodbath as the protagonist is finally sent over the edge by piecemeal memories of a Mai Lai-style massacre for which he may or may not have been responsible.

An angry, gruelling, brutal, and uncompromisingly pitch-black work which is at times well nigh unwatchable (especially the sequence of a junkie cramming a fix into his arm with a coat hanger). This is cinematic Everclear for even the most hardened genre enthusiasts. Recommended, but with severe reservations.

● Todd French

## EARTH STAR VOYAGER

Directed by James Goldstone. ABC-TV, 1/88, 240 mins. With: Duncan Regehr, Brian McNamara, Julia Montgomery, Jason Michas.

This tedious 4-hour TV movie from Walt Disney contributes no new concepts to the space opera genre. Richard Edlund special effects, consisting mainly of spaceships and starfields, are nice but uninteresting. Their integration into the plot isn't helped by ponderous, soporific music by Lalo Schifrin.

After a spaceship mutiny prologue set in 2082, action shifts to 2088 where a crew of 115 teens and preteens is sent on a 26-year mission to check

out the planet Demetur's suitability for relocating the population of Earth, suffering from terminal pollution. A variety of predictable disasters befall the crew, some of which are solved in the time-honored fist fight fashion, amid excellent John DeCuir sets. After four hours, the crew remains alive and on their way, but their mission is still not completed and they've discovered a powerful enemy, providing grist for a proposed TV series.

○ Judith P. Harris

## EVIL TOWN

Directed by Edward Collins, Peter S. Traynor, & Larry Spiegel. Trans World Video, 1984. With: James Keach, Robert Walker, Dean Jagger.

There's a pretty interesting story here, unfortunately it's not the one on the screen. The bulk of this video release was originally filmed in 1974 under the title *GOD BLESS DR. SHAGETZ*. That's the film with James Keach, Robert Walker, and all the wonderful old character actors. Never released, the film sat somewhere for a decade until entrepreneur Mardi Rustam (producer of Tobe Hooper's *EATEN ALIVE*) picked it up and re-edited it, adding nude footage of *Playboy* Playmate Lynda Wiesmeier.

The story, which probably wasn't too good to start with, details a tale surprisingly similar to O'Bannon's *DEAD AND BURIED*, with a deceptively normal small town sporting residents who are virtual monsters, wantonly killing to help Dr. Shagetz (Dean Jagger) in his experiments to keep them all eternally young. Almost seamlessly intercut with this is Rustam's new footage involving a pair of sadistic garage mechanics (remarkably similar to two characters who

appear in the producer's equally awful *EVILS OF THE NIGHT*) who help the old folks catch their prey. There is also a lot of footage of Jagger's supposed assistant (gorgeous Jillian Kessner) who spends most of her time in a different hospital (the same one used in *EVILS OF THE NIGHT*).

The bulk of the new footage added by Rustam details the psycho-mechanics' pursuit of the topless Wiesmeier. An added subplot involving an escaped victim provides the most impressive blend of the old and the new. In one scene Keach's hippie character swings a punch (circa 1974) and knocks out the would-be escapee in the 1984 footage. The final result is none too good but probably no better, and no worse, than the original product.

● John Thonen

## HOWLING 3

Directed by Philippe Mora. Vista Home Video, 10/87. With: Barry Otto, Imogen Annesley, Ralph Cotterill, Michael Pate.

This assertively boring film about werewolves in the Australian outback bypasses every potentially original avenue, and suffers greatly from the absence of Christopher Lee or any actor of similar authority. There are two improvements: 1) Sybil Danning is not among the cast, and 2) effects man Bob McCarron's werewolves actually look like werewolves—not monkeys as in *HOWLING 2*.

○ Bill Kelley

## JULIA AND JULIA

Directed by Peter Del Monte. Cinecom, 1/88, 92 mins. With: Kathleen Turner, Sting, Gabriel Byrne.

Peter Del Monte's fascinating new film is a surreal portrait of a widowed travel agent (Kathleen Turner) drifting in and out of two realities. In one, Julia's a content housewife liv-

ing with the husband (Gabriel Byrne) she might have had; in the other, she's in the midst of an affair with an enigmatic photographer (Sting). Turner switches effortlessly between both roles, never allowing one to upstage or overwhelm the other. Sting is his usual charismatic self (viewers even get to see him in the buff).

As in his earlier *INVITATION AU VOYAGE*, director Del Monte shifts between illusion and reality with amazing ease and confidence, until neither Julia nor the viewer is sure which is real or which is taking place in the mind of the heroine. This also marks the first feature shot entirely with high definition video. The resolution and subtle changes in contrast are remarkable, but an annoying strobe effect on quick movements give away the video origins.

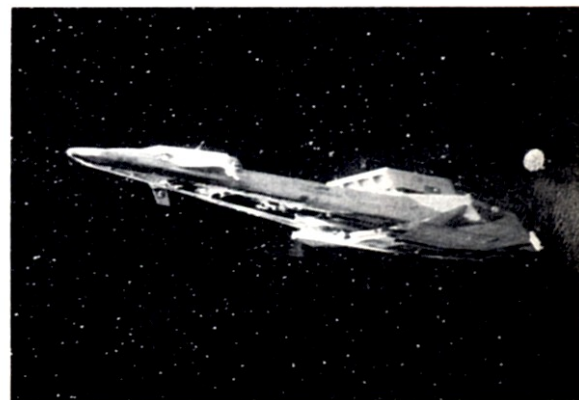
● Les Paul Robley

## LEONARD—PART 6

Directed by Paul Weiland. Columbia, 12/87, 85 mins. With: Bill Cosby, Tom Courtenay, Joe Don Baker, Moses Gunn.

Bill Cosby's first post-#1 TV show movie fails not because it is weird, but because it is dull. A booby prize for flat and unembellished plot outweighs blue ribbons for trying something new. Clever bits arise, such as unphased chefs who shout "Flambe!" at a kitchen fire, Leonard's unending but ultimately inadequate tie collection, or the dinner his wife serves unto him, but they're too few. You don't get to care for the character much since Leonard's cool infallibility as a retired secret agent is oft-mentioned and seldom shown, and he displays no particularly clever action or noble intent to endear himself. Cosby's deadpan attitude needs something off of which to play; without it

Disney's *EARTHSTAR VOYAGER*, lackluster space series pilot.





# FILM RATINGS

he looks as bored as the audience...

Still, a film can't be all bad that has an army of slowly amassing frogs hop a car off the pier. **o Allen Malmquist**

## LIGHT YEARS

Directed by Rene Laloux. Miramax Films, 1/88. Voices: John Shea, Jennifer Grey, Christopher Plummer, Glenn Close.

This American version of GANDAHAR, a French film by the maker of FANTASTIC PLANET is notable in featuring the first screenplay of science fiction giant Isaac Asimov, who provides the English dialogue. The result is somber and obviously intended for adults. Sylvain, a warrior, is sent to stop experimental cancerous brain cells from sending mechanical men from the future to the present to depopulate the planet of Gandahar. However, even Asimov can't cover up the story's lack of excitement and its failure to convincingly resolve the time paradox it sets up, leaving us with only animator Philippe Cazaumayou's alien flora and fauna to gawk at.

•• Dennis Fischer

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Anyone who remembers THE MIGHTY HEROES from years gone by will not be surprised to find Ralph Bakshi's return to television animation anything but average. The man who treated Spiderman with the drama and style live-action has yet to duplicate has found a whole new way to revive a never-very-inventive cartoon hero.

The new series sets the old anti-feline tales in a new and bizarre universe full of exotic creatures, crazy action, and pop-art styling. Bakshi also raids old cartoons and Top 40 radio in a copy cat version of Disney's DTV videos. These B-grade Terrytoon clips show up the stilted animation of the modern Mighty Mouse, yet producer/supervising director/story director Bakshi instills his plots and artwork with enough wild inventiveness to keep things moving.

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•• David Wilt

## THE NEST

Directed by Terence H. Winkless. Concord Pictures, 2/88, 88 mins. With: Robert Lansing, Lisa Langlois, Franc Luz, Terri Treas, Stephen Davies, Diana Bellamy.

Though this starts a little slow, once it gets rolling you won't be checking your watch.

INTEC, a faceless biomedical research company, has done genetic experiments on roaches to create a cannibal roach, designed to kill other roaches. The beasts get loose on North Port Island, attacking and eating people and animals. Things get pretty far-fetched when the next generation mutates into a combination of the roach and whatever it ate, offering the special effects people the opportunity to showcase cat roaches, and people roaches.

Terri Treas, a Jane Badler look alike, plays an evil INTEC scientist, and Stephen Davies provides the comic relief as a Bill Murray-ish exterminator. The film is full of references to

other bug films, such as a half-eaten man under a baseball cap, an image from the army ant film, THE NAKED JUNGLE (1954). When mayor Robert Lansing inexplicably locks himself in a bathroom with a zillion roaches only to return in mutated form, he splits open and a newly evolved roach/man hybrid emerges—a la Cronenberg's THE FLY.

If you thought the cockroach story was the best part of CREEPSHOW, here's your chance to see lots more of the little guys.

•• JPH

## OPEN HOUSE

Directed by Jag Mundhra. Prism Video, 1/88, 90 mins. With: Joseph Bottoms, Adrienne Barbeau, Mary Staviv.

This exercise in stalk and slash is elevated slightly by a better than average cast and an oddly schizophrenic tendency toward sincere drama. Joseph Bottoms effectively essays the role of a shrink on a call-in radio show who is trying to deal with his remorse in failing to save a suicidal teenager. One of his callers is a maniac responsible for a series of brutal murders of real estate agents. Naturally, Bottoms' girlfriend is a real estate agent (Adrienne Barbeau).

In direct contrast to the straight drama are some fairly nasty slasher sequences. It seems likely that neither of the stars knew of the material since neither appears in any of the splatter sequences and their connecting dialogue never directly refers to any specifics of the rather brutal crimes. These maniacal acts reach a zenith, or perhaps nadir is more accurate, with the standard issue huge, hulking killer pouring champagne over the bare chest of one victim and then placing electrical clips on her breasts and plugging the other end into a wall socket. Most of this occurs offscreen but, in case anyone missed the implications, we are treated to a final closeup of the french fried breasts in a shot that almost screams "insert." Most of what must have been the original film has been snipped away in favor of these smoothly inserted, but all too typical, scenes of gore and nudity.

o John Thonen

## PRISON

Directed by Renny Harlin. Empire Pictures, 3/88. With: Lane Smith, Viggo Mortensen, Lincoln Kilpatrick.

This initial collaboration between producer Irwin Yablans (HALLOWEEN) and Empire Pictures emerges as a tense, atmospheric genre entry despite its jolting, coarse editing, and glaring plot inconsistencies. Director Renny Harlan carefully establishes a realistic, gritty prison environment in his depiction of the spirit of an executed inmate's quest for revenge. The film's strong visual sense owes much to lenser Mac Ahlberg's provocative use of light and shadow, and the sparkling effects of John Carl Beuchler's Mechanical and Makeup Imagery, Inc.

•• Vincent J. Bossone

## RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD PART II

Directed by Ken Wiederhorn. Lorimar, 1/88, 89 mins. With: James Karen, Thom Matthews, Michael Kenworthy, Marsha Dietlein.

It's not scary. It's not funny. It's got some of the cheesiest zombie makeup seen in a long time. One solid laugh did man-



# FILM RATINGS

he looks as bored as the audience...

Still, a film can't be all bad that has an army of slowly amassing frogs hop a car off the pic. **o Allen Malmquist**

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## PRISON

Directed by Renny Harlin. Empire Pictures, 3/88. With: Lane Smith, Viggo Mortensen, Lincoln Kilpatrick.

This initial collaboration between producer Irwin Yablans (HALLOWEEN) and Empire Pictures emerges as a tense, atmospheric genre entry despite its jolting, coarse editing, and glaring plot inconsistencies. Director Renny Harlan carefully establishes a realistic, gritty prison environment in his depiction of the spirit of an executed inmate's quest for revenge. The film's strong visual sense owes much to lenser Mac Ahlberg's provocative use of light and shadow, and the sparkling effects of John Carl Beuchler's Mechanical and Makeup Imagery, Inc.

•• Vincent J. Bossone

## RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD PART II

Directed by Ken Wiederhorn. Lorimar, 1/88, 89 mins. With: James Karen, Thom Matthews, Michael Kenworthy, Marsha Dietlein.

It's not scary. It's not funny. It's got some of the cheesiest zombie makeup seen in a long time. One solid laugh did man-





The Imp of **SORORITY BABES IN THE SLIMEBALL BOWL-A-RAMA**, from *Urban Classics*.

age to wake up opening day Times Square audiences: the brief appearance of an electrocuted zombie dressed like Michael Jackson in **THRILLER**, jumping to the current.

o **Judith P. Harris**

## THE SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW

Directed by Wes Craven. Universal, 2/88, 98 mins. With: Bill Pullman, Cathy Tyson, Zakes Mokae, Paul Winfield.

A refreshingly different approach to the zombie genre, going back to Haitian lore and suggesting a world where the mystical and the actual intermix. Based on a true story by an ethnobotanist who was directed, for medical purposes, to discover the drug which seemingly killed and then revived people as zombies. The film contains plenty of director Wes Craven's trademark "dream time" sequences and imaginative visuals. But it's more intriguing than horrifying.

o o o **Dennis Fischer**

## SISTER, SISTER

Directed by Bill Condon. New World, 9/87, 119 mins. With: Eric Stoltz, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Judith Ivey, Dennis Lipscomb.

This neo-Gothic psychological suspenser is at times an effective entry in the Southern Dementia sweepstakes. Unfortunately, though its style is polished to a high sheen (script is co-written by Joel Cohen of **BLOOD SIMPLE** and **RAISING ARIZONA** fame, and film reeks of his and brother Ethan's moods), it can't overcome its lack of originality or the contrived screenplay which, not content with its muddled red herrings, takes a surprise plunge into the supernatural for its rain-soaked Grand Guignol finale.

The plot, which is as murky as the film's bayou milieu, tells the story of a nubile, disturbed young miss, Lucy (Jennifer Jason Leigh), and her repressed domineering older sibling Charlotte (Judith Ivey), haunted by a Terrible Family Secret. Before you can say **HUSH, HUSH, SWEET CHARLOTTE**, their delicate equilibrium is shattered by the arrival of a Handsome Young Stranger in the form of congressional aide (Eric Stoltz), on vacation.

Neither the deep-dish brooding atmosphere, evocative locale lensing, or the presence of the always delectable Leigh (complete with an initial DePalma-like fantasy sequence), can surmount the portentous debut helming by Bill Condon. **THE NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET** twist doesn't help either. But there are a few good scares amidst the Eros and Thanatos shenanigans, thanks to the chemistry between Leigh and Stoltz.

o **Todd French**

## SORORITY BABES IN THE SLIME BALL BOWL-A-RAMA

Directed by Dave DeCoteau. Urban Classics, 2/88, 78 mins. With: Linnea Quigley, Michelle Bauer, Andras Jones, Robin Rochelle.

Three horny teens and two sorority babes unleash an imp from a stolen bowling trophy. Apart from the title, nothing is likely to strike the viewer as funny. The imp grants wishes, but no one has the intelligence to wish that this film had never been made.

o **Dennis Fischer**

## SPACERAGE

Directed by Conrad E. Palmisano. Lighting Video, 1987. With: Michael Pare, Lee Purcell, Richard Farnsworth, William Windom, John Laughlin.

This western posing as science fiction features an unusually strong cast that plays straight its tale of convict revolt on the prison planet of Proxima Centauri 3, also known as New Botany Bay

(shades of **STAR TREK**). Michael Pare, who has blown several major roles (**STREETS OF FIRE**, **THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT**, **EDDIE AND THE CRUISERS**) as a bland good guy, makes a surprisingly effective villain as Granger, a remorseless and amoral killer. John Laughlin is dull in what appears to be the lead role, but in a strange plot twist, he is killed and his buddy, old time lawman Richard Farnsworth, picks up his blasters and singlehandedly stops the revolt.

The film's genre aspects are minimal. There's an acceptable opening matte shot of a futuristic city, a couple of shots of the prison transport on the way to the Prison planet and a few shots of the transport landing and taking off. That, and the presence of blasters instead of standard six guns, are about the only concessions to the film's supposed futuristic setting.

The low-budget production does offer some decent action sequences and a not uninteresting soundtrack by a group called Yorface. If the intention was to create a futuristic type spaghetti western, a kind of "Clint Eastwood in Space," it doesn't come off.

o **John Thonen**

## SPOOKIES

Directed by Eugenie Joseph, Thomas Doran, & Brenda Faulkner. JVC, 1/88, 83 mins. With: Peter Dain, Nick Giotta.

Filed in 1985 under the title **TWISTED SOULS**, this was shown at the Cannes Film Festival under its present title in May 1986, and made its belated theatrical appearance in New York in January 1988. According to *Variety*, the film was originally directed by Brendan Faulkner and Thomas Doran, but completed by editor Eugenie Joseph after a disagreement with the British-based financial backer.

The film has little plot and seems to have been devised



Zakes Mokae (l), demon inquisitor of **SERPENT & THE RAINBOW**.

merely as a showcase for the special makeup effects of Arnold Gargiulo II, Vincent Guastini, Gabriel Bartalos, Jennifer Aspinal, and John Dods. The effects are mainly of the rubber John Beuchler school of creatures, the best of which—the lizardy thing in the print ads—is undercut by inappropriately funereal background music during its brief appearance. Optical effects are especially primitive and appear to have been achieved by scratching the negative in the time honored tradition of home movie productions.

Two carloads of partygoers stop by an old house in the cemetery. They discover a ouija board, which leads to the possession of one of the women by an evil sorcerer (Felix Ward), who intends to sacrifice them all to re-animate his young bride (Maria Pechukas), dead 70 years but remarkably preserved in body and clothing. The couples split up and explore the house, enabling them to be killed-off one by one by a variety of creatures, such as Muck Men and a Grim Reaper statue which comes to life. An oriental lady in the basement turns into a rubbery spider; and in the end, zombies come out of the cemetery.

o **Judith P. Harris**

## UNSANE (aka TENEBRAE)

Directed by Dario Argento. Sigma Cinema Video, 1987. With: Anthony Franciosa, John Saxon, Daria Nicolodi, Giuliano Gemma.

Video release of gore-art meister Dario Argento's 1982 **TENEBRAE**, eschewing the no-holds-barred aural-visual hi-jinks of recent entries in his "Three Mothers" occult trilogy (begun with **SUSPIRIA** and **INFERNO**). Film harkens in its plot to Argento's '70s whodunits. The climax has Anthony Franciosa struggle with a viciously spiked piece of modern art in a direct nod to Argento's **BIRD WITH THE CRYSTAL PLUMAGE**.

o o o **Dann Gire**

Featuring one of Argento's tightest plots (not one of his strong suits), film follows mystery writer Franciosa, who becomes the pivotal point in a series of gruesome murders carried out by a black-gloved assassin, which parallel events in his new novel. As usual for Argento, meticulously staged murder set-pieces (including a couple of axings all but excised by the censor) are followed by stretches of pedestrian writing and flat performances, with a bevy of beautiful victims who are all pretty much interchangeable.

Still, a few scenes are vintage Argento: one where the camera does an attenuated crawl up the side of a building where a couple of female victims are cowering, and another where a lesbian victim views her attacker through her slashed t-shirt. Of special interest to genre fans: the film reunites Argento with **SUSPIRIA** photographer Luciano Tovoli who gives the movie its evocative sheen.

o o o **Todd French**

## VICE VERSA

Directed by Brian Gilbert. Columbia, 2/88, 99 mins. With: Judge Reinhold, Fred Savage, Swoosie Kurtz.

A remake of the 1947 British comedy, this film casts Judge Reinhold and Fred Savage as an estranged father and son who switch personalities when they touch a magic skull stolen from Tibetan monks. The predictable re-tread is made enjoyable by the chemistry between the stars: Savage's chief talent is "looking cute," and Reinhold (a graduate of the Alan Alda school of nice guys) has a ball with his juvenile incarnation. The script has a nice symmetrical neatness, for instance, three bullies who harass the student have their adult counterparts in three back-stabbers at the office. Compared to Dudley Moore's dud—**LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON**—this looks like a masterpiece.

The witch/spider puppet of **SPOOKIES** by Vincent Guastini.





## CRITTERS II

continued from page 15

for only limited face, arm and hand movements and an overabundance of tedious set-up time. The new versions, now standing 16" tall, have only two cables, one for each arm, and are articulated with sophisticated radio controls which give the Critters a series of intricate facial expressions, including more detailed brow and lip movement. Set-up time has been reduced to just a few short minutes.

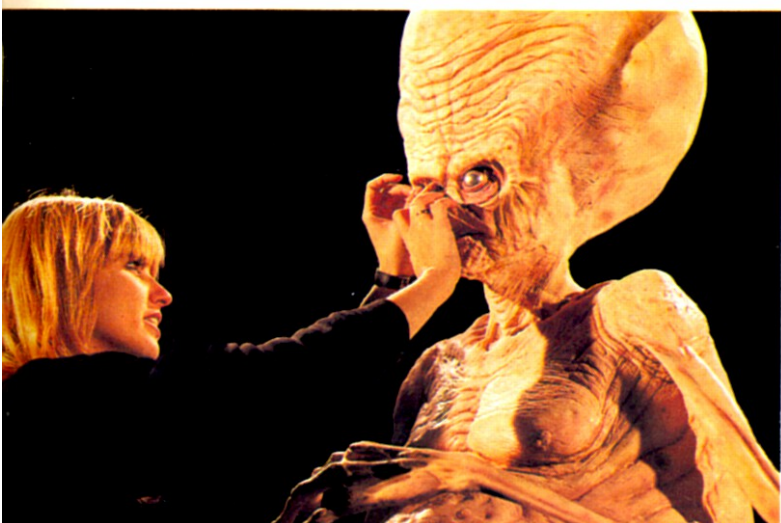
The Critters also come in different shapes and sizes as is revealed when the eggs hatch. Baby Critters, rod puppets with lighter latex skin and hair (actually rabbit fur), prove equally nasty as their black and gray adult counterparts.

Makeup artist Chris Biggs handled the elaborate alien effects. Biggs and his crew worked on a tight schedule, starting just three weeks prior to filming. Most notable is their creation of the Hexapod, a fully mechanized monster which appears in the opening sequence as the alien bounty hunters are searching through a strange cavern on another planet. "It's all teeth and tentacles," said Biggs, describing the creature. Biggs also constructed a number of decapitated alien heads which appear briefly in the bounty hunter's spaceship locker.

Biggs had the unpleasant task of turning Garris' wife, a strikingly attractive blond, into the globular, bubble-headed intergalactic supreme being known as Zanti, seen briefly at the opening of the first film, but in decidedly less exaggerated form. Biggs redesigned the character to look more reminiscent of the aliens of '50s films. "It's really outrageous," Biggs said.

Peter Kuran's Visual Concepts Engineering is handling the optical effects, including scenes requiring huge masses of Critters in the same shot. Kuran will also supply a half dozen shots of the bounty hunters' spaceship. □

Makeup effects assistant Camille Calvet details Chris Biggs' design for the Zanti in CRITTERS II, a creature operated in the film by the wife of director Mick Garris.



Aunt and uncle (Nancy Allen and Tom Skerritt) try to retrieve Carol Anne from the other side in POLTERGEIST III, an effect achieved live without use of opticals.

## ROMERO

continued from page 21

DEAD was to be before drastic budget cuts necessitated rewrites that changed its perspective. "TWILIGHT OF THE DEAD was never real," Romero insisted. "It was a project that was suggested to me by other people. I may have joked about it, but I never had any intention of doing it." However, Romero is considering producing a remake of the original NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, with Tom Savini as director.

Romero's next project looks to be APARTMENT LIVING, a horror-comedy created by Warren Hite, with a script by Hite and Romero, polished by Joe Stillman for Saratoga Films. The story concerns a beautifully kept apartment building in a decaying neighborhood that houses mostly retirees which turns out to be a living entity that maintains itself and sustains the elderly within, some of whom are well over 100 years old. To maintain this capability, the building needs a periodic feeding and will go to great lengths to perpetuate itself. Pre-production is scheduled for May with a June start date on Florida and Pittsburgh locations for release by New Century/Vista. □

## POLTERGEIST III

continued from page 17

Oddly enough Sherman, whose most outstanding horror film is the British-lensed RAW MEAT (1972), was once an associate professor in animation and optical effects at the Illinois Institute of Technology during the late '60s. For POLTERGEIST III, however, Sherman opted to nix the opticals. "It was all filmed live," Sherman stated, "using glass, mirrors and lenses. Actually, it's just a matter of reflecting and refracting light." Use of creative camera angles and constructing rooms with mirror images was also part of the process. "Actors were trained by a mime," continued Sherman, "to react exactly as their mirror images," to create some surprising effects.

Much of what the actors reacted to was created by POLTERGEIST III's special effects makeup department. Coordinating the group of latex laborers were John Caglione and Doug Drexler, a partnership whose credits include FX, THE HUNGER, ALTERED STATES, BASKET CASE, MAKING MR. RIGHT and STARMAN. They are both acknowledged proteges of veteran makeup master, Dick Smith, who is listed formally as a consultant on the project. Smith had worked with the duo on STARMAN and recommended them to Bernardi. Other Smith colleagues working on the film are Oscar-winner Stephan Dupuis (THE FLY) and Kevin Haney.

With effects being done live, the shooting proved arduous for the cast. Tom Skerritt said that his role in POLTERGEIST III had "been a lot of running up and down stairs, getting wet, almost drowning in a meat locker, hanging out over a 100-story building at night with 50 mph gusts of wind blowing, and being chased by cars in a snowstorm inside a parking garage." Quipped Skerritt, "But outside of that, Mrs. Lincoln, how'd you like the play?" □

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## BATTERIES

continued from page 47

superficial, and they're never given distinct enough personalities to become more than cute plot devices waiting around to patch things up at the movie's end.

Ironically enough, *BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED*'s failure to adequately flesh out its premise suffers most in comparison with Spielberg's own best films. *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND* and *E.T.* have immeasurably increased what we expect from fantasy films, but as producer of movies like *HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS* and *BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED*, Spielberg is increasingly moving the genre backward in time to the bad old days. His fine *EMPIRE OF THE SUN* shows how much he's matured as a director; it's time that Spielberg, the producer, acknowledged that his audience is growing up, too. □

## THE MIRROR

continued from page 33

Malone's next task was securing the rights to Giger's paintings as well as his active involvement in the project. As Giger was still smarting from the bastardization of his vision in *POLTERGEIST II*, this proved to be no easy feat.

"When I approached him, he was very unhappy about that film," said Malone. "He just didn't want to become involved in any more features. We told him we intended to adapt his work faithfully, and would be delighted to have him physically present to supervise that process. 'Whatever you want, we'll do,' I said."

Malone had an easier time of persuading Novotny, Beswick, and the Skotaks to sign up with the project. He had worked with them on *CREATURE*, and they had not only got on famously together, but made a product that, in terms of look, transcended poor writing, bad performances, and an effects budget so small it boggled the mind.

Indeed, it was that experience that persuaded Novotny to work once again with Malone and colleagues. Novotny recalled that the art department's budget on *CREATURE* had been \$120,000. "On *FLIGHT OF THE NAVIGATOR* we spent \$70,000 a day," he said. "The discrepancy between the two films was vast. On *CREATURE* we spent most of our time pulling rabbits out of our hats. And regardless of the script, plot and performers, I was happy with what we brought off."

Novotny said he is particularly excited by the prospect of bringing Giger's work to three-dimensional

life, although he believes that doing so will sorely test his talents. "Giger's work is, in many respects, an aesthetic contradiction," explained Novotny. "It is at once hideous and beautiful. The sense of composition is balanced, but the females are elongated. They almost have a deco feel while being ensconced in a hideous organic form that lacks any definition—you just can't figure out what this stuff is."

"At first glance, his paintings also appear to be monochromatic. In *Necronomicon* the paintings appear to rely solely on steel grays and rust. But you look more closely and you see the overlays of color that produce the effect. It's the same feeling you get when you look at a painting that's been dry-brushed—there are delicate overlays of color on color on color, yet the perception is of a single color."

Interpreting Giger's use of scale in three dimensions also poses a challenge to Novotny. He said that no two people looking at Giger's paintings ever agree on the scale of objects appearing in the background. He doesn't think this is an intentional effect worked by Giger, but it is certainly worth preserving. "My sense is that these shapes feel right to him, have an aesthetic curve or highlight of edge, or lighting effect that functions as a caress. I'm looking forward to finding out if this is indeed the case."

Novotny is not concerned with Giger's reputation as an exacting taskmaster who has proved difficult for many in the industry to work with. But he is concerned with the extent to which Giger's work has become a stylistic commonplace.

"I have a certain amount of distrust for work that is merchandised as product," he said. "It happened to Salvador Dali and it has been the case with Giger. A certain immediacy seems to have been lost—at least for me. So in a sense it will be my job to redefine his work and recapture its urgency. I'd temper that, however, by saying that this is something I intend to pursue together with him. I'm quite confident that we can create a genuinely Gigeresque world-beyond-the-looking-glass."

Preproduction for *THE MIRROR* began late in January, and Giger was slated to arrive in Los Angeles to supervise the film's design. Unfortunately, time and budgetary constraints conspired to permit Giger only two weeks on the sets, which would be built in a warehouse somewhere in the city. According to Malone, half of the film's entire budget has been earmarked for set design and effects, an amount which Malone believes

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adequate, especially since the film is an independent effort. "There's enough of the filmmaker in me that says if someone gives me a million dollars I can make them a movie. There's always a way of making an effect—one may take more money and less time or more time and less money."

Asked why he has eschewed the possibility of employing computer animation techniques to bring Giger's visions to life more cheaply than by constructing huge, detailed sets, Novotny said it comes down to performance. "Animation and computer graphics might be a great process for creating some of these forms. But pre-planning and storyboarding doesn't lend itself to good acting. It's the old problem of getting an actor to relate to a blue screen."

Novotny appeared indifferent to the likelihood that his work will, by necessity, reflect something of the look Ridley Scott achieved in ALIEN. "If there are any parallels, it will be for good reason—the conceptual art that served as the basis for ALIEN is the same for THE MIRROR. This is clearly Giger's world. But in THE MIRROR, the acting, the script and the situation set the film apart from ALIEN. It's a different film with a different feel. We're not setting this picture in outer space. We don't even have an operational definition of this place beyond the mirror yet."

Novotny said he has been particularly encouraged by the reactions some industry executives and producers have had to the script. "A number of people who believe a film should work toward the lowest common denominator of acceptance have expressed their concerns that a number of scenes were too strong, too real, and too strange. And of course, Bill Malone has no intention of diluting his vision. But the response fills me with confidence." □

Swiss surrealist H.R. Giger in the bedroom of his Zurich apartment/gallery/studio, with the mirror design he plans to use as the key to another world in THE MIRROR.



## KEN MYERS

continued from page 41

a nearby cemetery, thus reanimating its inhabitants. The idea comes across as one of the more blatant writer's devices in the script: we never find out where the army was taking the drums. The only reason they are moved at all seemed to be so Wiederhorn can start the story unfolding. Through Wiederhorn's gaseous fog of predictable scripting detailing a small band of survivors' attempts to escape the hordes of brain-eating zombies, Myers' makeup work turned out to be the sole element of the film that managed to capture the "spirit" of O'Bannon's film.

A big difference in Myers' approach was that the new film featured a minimum of gross-out effects. "They were really going for a PG-13—which they didn't get. That threw a crowbar into the works. It became more of a gag-writing show—what could we make silly and funny rather than gross and disgusting. That was challenging—to see how silly we could push before we turn into slapstick."

"It was grotesque but pretty bloodless. I hate working with blood. It's sticky; it's wet; it's cold; and it takes an hour in the shower to get it off!" □

## FRIGHT NIGHT 2

continued from page 18

it." CHILDSPLAY is a horror/thriller about a man who comes back to life and wreaks havoc on a family and its household, to be released by MGM/UA in the fall.

The major effects for FRIGHT NIGHT—PART 2 are being created by Fantasy II, the same group responsible for the stunning work in THE TERMINATOR and the Emmy-winning mini-series, THE WINDS OF WAR. In charge of the makeup and prosthetic effects for Fantasy II are Greg Cannom (THE LOST BOYS), Bart Mixon (ROBOCOP) and Brian Wade



Traci Lin, the hero's psychology student girlfriend in FRIGHT NIGHT 2, inspects momentos that decorate the apartment of fearless vampire killer Peter Vincent.

(HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS). Four weeks of creature, stop-motion and visual effects filming were scheduled after the completion of principal photography. Budgeted at \$8 million, the film's intended 45-day shooting schedule went to just over 50. But executive producer Herb Jaffe pointed out "When it's all completed, we'll probably bring it in at just under \$7 million."

During shooting, FRIGHT NIGHT 2 was housed at the old S&A studios located in "old Hollywood," occupying two sound stages that looked as if they should have caved in years ago. Stage One housed three set pieces—a huge elevator shaft, built at a 40° angle and taking up nearly half of the stage space; another portion of the elevator, a vertical shaft with half an elevator car; and a dark, gloomy basement set filled with coffins. The elevator shaft scenes culminate in what ultimately will be the climax of the film.

"It's exhilarating yet one's equilibrium is thrown off due to the angle—and it's very claustrophobic!" said Roddy McDowall as he climbed out of the tilted shaft, which is also pumped full of smoke. For a man nearing 60, McDowall is incredibly fit and even with a case of the flu, has managed to do incredibly exhausting physical action scenes.

When asked about the endurance record of the vampire film, director Wallace put it this way. "I think that people just love to be scared, and vampire legends have been around a long time. This latest rebirth of the vampire craze is simply due to a handful of very good pictures. If the pictures weren't any good, it wouldn't be a craze."

Although FRIGHT NIGHT—PART 2 will feature its effects prominently, Wallace said he is concerned mainly with crafting a good story for the sequel. "No matter what number comes after the

title there must be a good story," he said. "If it's a lousy story, all the hype in the world, all the advertising and hoopla won't make a bit of difference and the success of the original won't matter either." □

## FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC

continued from page 45

Fries to extricate himself from the fiasco, Bloom received a call from the guild informing him he would receive sole script credit.

It was at this point, late spring, 1987, that Fries brought in Tony Kayden to direct. Kayden had not directed features before, but according to John (NIGHT OF THE COMET, RIVER'S EDGE) Muto, the movie's production designer, "he did his homework and the reshoot of the film's finale came in on schedule."

Muto said that Bloom had, in fact, given his blessing to the people he had brought in on the project when they called and asked if they should agree to the reshoot. "Everybody loved Jeffrey," said Muto. "No one would have gone back to work had he asked them not to."

Muto said the reshoot was marred, however, by a power struggle between Kayden and a producer Fries had put on the film. "He was an old director from the '60s. He used to do 77 SUNSET STRIP. And he had this fantasy of taking over. The result was some high comedy on the set."

Moreover, at one point actress Victoria Tennant decided she did not like the way her character was being dispatched to the great beyond, and she walked off the picture. "We stood there stunned," said Muto. "We kept asking each other if she could actually do that. Apparently she could because she never came back."

Bloom's friends said he lived in dread of seeing the final version of the film when it was released last November. □





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### HORROR/SF II

The Thing, Man Who Turned to Stone, Fiend Without a Face, Barbarella, Rodan, Blood Beast From Outer Space, Giant Gila Monster, The Alligator People, Curse of the Fly, Children of the Damned, The Gamma People, Day of the Triffids, Attack of the Crab Monsters, The Human Vapor, Target Earth, Varan the Unbelievable, Creeping Unknown, The Omega Man, 20 Million Miles to Earth, Latitude Zero, The Unknown Terror, Monster That Challenged the World, The Andromeda Strain, Monster from Green Hell, Five First Men in the Moon, This Island Earth, The Invisible Ray, Forbidden Planet, Godzilla King of the Monsters - 60 mins.

### HORROR/SF III

Werewolf in a Girls Dormitory, Corridors of Blood, Attack of the Killer Shrews, Egah!, Creature From the Haunted Sea, Creature Walks Among Us, Horror of Party Beach, The Old Dark House (Castle), The Mysterious Island (29), The Bride of Frankenstein, The Skull, Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman, From Hell It Came, Gorilla at Large, Bride of the Monster, The Haunting, The Mummy (31), Frankenstein 1970, The Slime People, Dr. Blood's Coffin, Mighty Joe Young, Invasion of the Body Snatchers, The Manster, The Exorcist, The Crawling Hand, Haunted Strangler, Curse of the Demon, Abominable Snowman of the Himalayas, Little Shop of Horrors (Corman), Fearless Vampire Killers, The Phantom of the Opera (42), The Devil Dolls (Browning), The Climax (Karloff) - 60 mins.

### HORROR/SF IV (HAMMER HORROR)

Curse of Frankenstein, Revenge of Frankenstein, Evil of Frankenstein, Frankenstein Created Woman, Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed, Horror of Frankenstein, Frankenstein & the Monster From Hell, Hound of the Baskervilles, Creeping Unknown, Enemy From Space, 5 Million Years to Earth, Curse of the Werewolf, The Mummy, Curse of the Mummy's Tomb, Mummy's Shroud, Blood From the Mummy's Tomb, Gorgon, Phantom of the Opera, Horror of Dracula, The Brides of Dracula, Kiss of the Vampire, Dracula Prince of Darkness, Dracula

Has Risen From the Grave, Taste the Blood of Dracula, Scars of Dracula, Vampire Lovers, Lust for a Vampire, Countess Dracula, Vampire Circus, Dracula A.D. 1972, Count Dracula & His Vampire Bride, Legend of the 7 Golden Vampires - 75 mins.

### HORROR/SF V (HORRIBLE HONEYS)

Bride of Frankenstein, Bride of the Monster, Brides of Fu Manchu, Brides of Dracula, Frankenstein's Daughter, Daughter of Dr. Jekyll, Jessie James Meets Frankenstein's Daughter, Cat Girl, Devil Girl From Mars, Voodoo Woman, Wasp Woman, Leech Woman, Snake Woman, Night of the Cobra Woman, Attack of the 50-Foot Woman, Prehistoric Women, Werewolf Vs. the Vampire Woman, Wild Women of Wongo, She Creature, She Freak, Astounding She Monster, She Demons, Lady Frankenstein, Queen of Blood, Teenage Gang Debs, Girls on Probation, Monica: Story of a Bad Girl, Female Jungle, Blood of Dracula, Straight Jacket, Berserk, Frankenstein Created Woman, Brain That Wouldn't Die, Sinderelia & the Golden Bra - 78 mins.

### HORROR/SF VI (SUPER GIANTS)

The Blob, Son of Blob, Kronos, Konga, Frankenstein Conquers the World, Frankenstein Meets the Space Monster, Amazing Colossal Man, Village of the Giants, The Mysterians, It Came From Beneath the Sea, Beginning of the End, Reptilicus, Mothra, Night of the Lepus, The Deadly Mantis, Tarantula, Godzilla Vs The Smog Monster, The Lost World, The Valley of Gwangi, The Beast of Hollow Mountain, Attack of the Giant Leeches, Dinosaur, Gorgo, The Giant Behemoth, War of the Colossal Beast, Destroy All Monsters - 60 mins.

### HITCHCOCK COLLECTION

Rebecca, Suspicion, Saboteur, Shadow of a Doubt, Spellbound, Notorious, The Paradine Case, Rope, Under Capricorn, Dial M for Murder, Rear Window, To Catch a Thief, The Man Who Knew Too Much, The Trouble With Harry, Vertigo, North by Northwest, Psycho (Famous Hitchcock Tour), The Birds, Marnie, Torn Curtain - 60 mins.

### AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL PICTURES

Meteor, High Ballin, The Wild Party, Squirm, The Gay Deceivers, Return of Count Yorga, Bloody Mama, The Oblong Box, Wild in the Streets, Blood Bath, Ghost in the Invisible Bikini, Beach Blanket Bingo, Masque of the Red Death, Muscle Beach Party, Bikini Beach, Comedy of Terrors, Beach Party, The Haunted Palace, The Raven, The Pit and the Pendulum, The Premature Burial, The Fall of the House of Usher, The Amazing Transparent Man, Bucket of Blood, The Brain that Wouldn't Die, Attack of the Puppet People, Night of the Blood Beast, How to Make a Monster, I Was a Teenage Frankenstein, I Was a Teenage Werewolf, Blood of Dracula, Invasion of the Saucer Men, Phantom From 10,000 Leagues - 60 mins.

## THE SCORE

continued from page 22  
you think is best."

Young recorded his score and turned it in, and that was the last he heard from the filmmakers until he saw the film in the theatre—and almost all of his score was gone. The film's editor, Alain Jakubowicz, had taken over the project after Hooper's departure and evidently had different ideas about the musical approach. He brought in his friend, David Storrs, an in-house trailer composer for Cannon, to re-score much of Young's electronic music, and his own compositions gradually took over more and more of the film until only about 30% of what Young had written remained in the film.

The dissolution of his INVADERS FROM MARS score was a blow for Young, who had been happier with what he had written for that film than he had for any score he'd done previously. The score utilized a lot of what is known as *musique concrete*—a type of music combining natural sound effects like drill presses, waterfalls and crowd noises manipulated through re-recording or electronic reprocessing. Young had experimented a great deal with *musique concrete* in conjunction with traditional orchestral sounds before he had begun his film career, and was excited with the opportunity to incorporate that kind of style in a film score. It was especially appropriate to the horrific otherworldly nature of a film like INVADERS FROM MARS. Gil Melle had done something similar in his score for THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN though without embodying it within an orchestral score, as Young did. Though Hooper liked this score, it evidently was too weird for Jakubowicz who eliminated all of it when he took over the project.

Young recalled the experience recently when he scored FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC and found himself likewise without a director to work with. Happily, this time his score remained intact. Jeffrey Bloom, the director of FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC, had walked off the project and disowned it during postproduction. The director had put together a temporary music track which was used in a test screening of the film which went over very badly. Co-producer Tom Fries was convinced that this was because the film was not properly edited and that the temporary music was so bombastic and overwhelming that it was counterproductive for this quiet, brooding melodrama.

Young took a look at the film and decided to compose what he

termed a perspective score. "I decided, in my music, to take on the perspective of one of the children in the film, emphasizing their loss, pain and suffering," said Young. The score was composed for solo soprano and an orchestra consisting only of strings, piano, harp and percussion.

Young doesn't feel the score is particularly a horrific score. He opted for a melodic approach to underscore characters and drama more than horror. "The music for FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC is based on two themes," Young said, "variations of a music box theme (a waltz-like melody which is related to the eldest daughter), and a soprano vocal line which is descriptive of the inner voice of the children as a whole. I switch between the two themes freely to describe the inner thoughts of the children throughout the score." In addition, Young's score incorporates whale sounds (as he did in NIGHTMARE II) and a variety of specially-built acoustic percussion instruments ("non-pitched sound-oriented instruments with electronic characteristics,") which were combined with a synthesizer played live with the orchestra.

But Young's most rewarding scoring experience has been on HELLRAISER. On this project, not only did Young have a close and satisfying artistic relationship with the director, Clive Barker, but he was able to incorporate those very same *musique concrete* styles which were deleted from INVADERS FROM MARS.

He almost, however, didn't get the project. Clive Barker had initially hired a British avant-garde jazz-rock group to compose and record the music for his film. Anthony Randel, an executive with New World Pictures which was producing the film, went to England to oversee the completion of the project and in the course of doing so he met with this group. After asking them some questions about the mechanics of film scoring and synchronization of sound to picture, he soon realized that they were not cut out to do the job.

Randel, a fan of Young's music, surreptitiously began to recommend to Barker and producer Christopher Figg that Young be given the assignment—he'd happen to be playing a tape of Young's music when Barker came over to his apartment, he'd sneak cassettes of Young's music into Barker's office, and so on. Ultimately Barker became so enamored of Young's music that he decided he wanted to use his work in HELLRAISER. Coincidentally, around this same time, the rock group realized for themselves that they were

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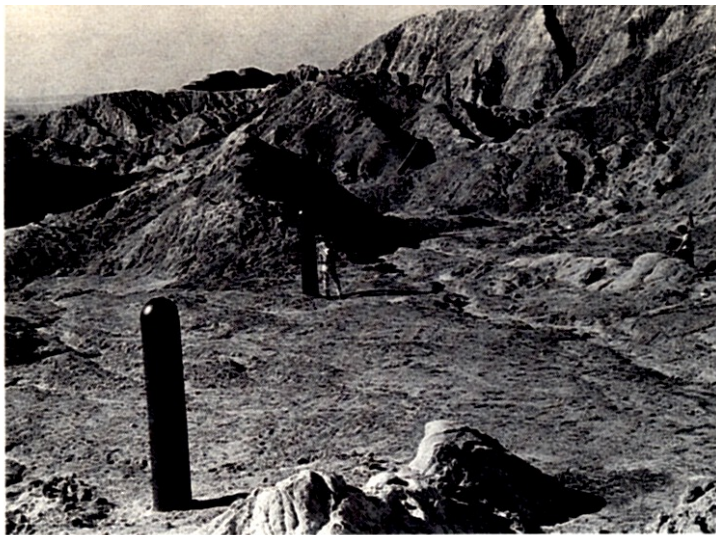
not cut out to score the film, and withdrew from the project. Young was quickly signed to score the movie.

While Barker had come to admire Christopher Young's music for previous horror scores like *DEF-CON 4* and *NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET II*, he specifically instructed Young not to treat *HELLRAISER* in the same manner that he had *NIGHTMARE*. "I don't want this film to be perceived as a horror film per se," Barker told him. "To me this is a film about someone's diseased obsession with someone else." Barker saw *HELLRAISER* as being a romantic film more than a horror film, and he wanted Young to emphasize that aspect.

After an initial meeting in New York during Christmastime 1986, Young's only contact with Barker, who had returned to England, was on the phone, and they had frequent discussions. Young was sent video cassettes of the rough cuts and various versions of the final cut as Barker polished the editing and post-production in England, and as the film changed so did Young's perception of it and his score.

From the start, Barker and Randel asked Young for a full orchestral score. Initially though, Young felt that such an elaborate approach might overwhelm a film which occurs for the most part in the small confines of a single house. Eventually, the filmmakers convinced Young that a full orchestral approach was indeed appropriate. "They talked me into things that I wouldn't have done otherwise," said Young. "For instance, the big transformation scene when Frank comes out of the floor—my first impression was to score it with non-melodic sound-mass oriented material. But Clive said he wanted to create this feeling of beauty, he wanted melody and something soaring, so I suggested a kind of diabolical waltz, which he said was perfect."

The score for *HELLRAISER* gave Young the opportunity to experiment with atonal sound-mass oriented material, music used purely as sound, lacking any melodic or thematic content. "We're just talking about dramatic sound, or, as I used to call it when I first started writing, 'sonic vomit,'" said Young. "The thing that's exciting about film music in horror films is that you're able to disregard melody and get into the idea of music as pure dramatic sound. People can't understand this, but when I'm asked what my favorite cues from *HELLRAISER* are, I would point to those cues and say 'that, to me, is like hell.' It's all those Boschian images turned



The beam-up sequence for *THE TROUBLE WITH DICK*, using sono-tubes made for pouring concrete to represent the force field stretching around the prison planet.

into sound, and it's more in line with that vocabulary of sound which we've seen in the works of Penderecki and Ligeti."

New World Pictures is producing a sequel, *HELLRAISER II*, which will be directed by Anthony Randel, Young's friend who was instrumental in getting him the assignment to score the first one. Randel has already contacted Young with the offer to score it. Filming began in January with a summer 1988 release date, and Young plans to record the music in the spring. In addition Clive Barker has said he hopes to have Young compose the music for his further directorial assignments as well.

"In retrospect, *HELLRAISER* was unquestionably the best project I've worked on, in terms of feeling a fantastic rapport with the director," said Young. One scene in the movie stands out to Young, who feels it is his best-scored scene. It occurs early on in the picture when Julia is upstairs in the house, sees the ripped photograph of Frank, and has a flashback of her first adulterous affair with him, and the scene cuts between her past memories, her standing in the room alone in real time, and her husband carrying the couch upstairs.

When Young saw the scene played back with his music, the sequence hit him with intense emotion. "For the first time I understood *exactly* what was going on in that woman's mind. And that's what film music is all about. Giving the opportunity to have complete mental and emotional and physical contact with that person on that screen in that situation. I was so overwhelmed by her pain when I heard the music added.

"I think that cue is to date the best thing that I've done. Not musically, necessarily, but just in feeling as though I've accomplished the job that every film composer hopes that he can do." □

## TROUBLE WITH DICK

continued from page 50

on a feature," said Walkow. "They'll work almost for free, especially if it's not an exploitation film."

Shooting for *THE TROUBLE WITH DICK* began in mid-October, 1985 and lasted six weeks. The schedule allowed for five weeks to shoot the house scenes, a week off for Thanksgiving, and then a week to shoot the desert fantasy sequences. During the week off, Walkow and crew worked on second-unit shots. "I calculated 33 days of first unit photography and eight or nine days of second unit," said Walkow about the tight schedule.

Walkow said he had hired someone who had worked with makeup wizard Rick Baker to do his off-camera special effects, but said the man was a "prima donna," and was fired within a week. "He kept proposing million-dollar aliens we had no money to make," said Walkow.

James Zarlengo, Walkow's dolly-grip, took over. Walkow said his entire crew revelled in taking new jobs as the need developed. Zarlengo is a lawyer who had a background in animation. He not only helped with some legal questions but delivered the film's aliens and it's talking zap gun.

"The guy is an inventor, a tinkerer," explained Walkow. "He told me he could deliver a gun like I had never seen before. We called it a chrono-blaster, made from an old chair leg, bike parts and friendly plastic. The headphones I stole from a plane." The sentient rifle-cum-navigation guide was eventually equipped with a voice by sound designer George Budd, who went on to work on the sound of *STAR TREK IV*. "He did that using the same process he had used on *2010: ODYSSEY II*," said Walkow. "He used a live actress and treated her voice electronically."

Walkow said that careful planning compensated for the production's niggling effects budget. He had wanted to cast his desert sequences in a green hue, with the skies green as well. "I've heard of big-budget SF movies running into insurmountable problems while trying to manage the same effect," he said. But by restricting the number of shots in which the sky was visible, Walkow and visual effects supervisor Les Bernstein managed to turn the desert into a sufficiently alien environment. "If it hadn't been coordinated right," he said, "we would have needed a travelling matte, which we could never have afforded."

Walkow did invest in a number of impressive opticals, particularly the movies 2001-style opening planetary vista and its closing "beam me up" shot. He said that because he was judicious in their use, it gave them greater impact.

Walkow and production designers Eric Jones and Pui-Pui Li fashioned the film's force-field with a number of sono-tubes they brought out to the desert. These tubes, used for pouring concrete, seemed to stretch off to the horizon and, conceivably, around the planet. The power field effect was created by Bernstein and his partner, Kurt Zendler, using rotoscoping and animation. "The desert shoot was very intense," Walkow said, "mainly because we didn't account for the short shooting days forced on us by the lack of sunlight. We had an effects sequence scheduled every day—the flying fish-bird, the eel, the force field. It got to be a real nightmare." □

Tom Villard as Dick, the hallucinating science fiction writer who gets caught up in the fantasy of one of his own stories.





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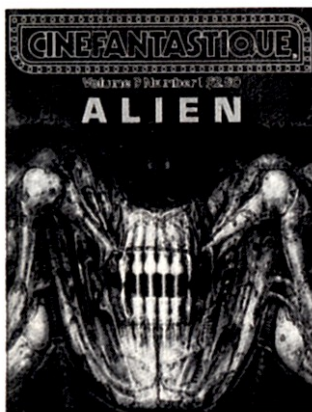
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## DATE WITH AN ANGEL

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ing sounds, such as bird chirps, dolphin squeaks and even the coo of a baby. Numerous sound experts, including representatives from George Lucas' Sprocket Systems, tried their hand, but, according to the director, the result always sounded either "too electronic or devoid of emotion." When production began without finding the right sound, McLoughlin allowed Beart to do her own cooing and chirping with the idea of dubbing over the sound later. After considerable experimentation, Beart's own voice was used, "celestialized" with triple dubbing, reverb, and an occasional dove coo and eagle shriek mixed in to add a bird-like feel to the vocals.

Beart's otherworldly cooing came in handy when it came time to fill DEG's Wilmington studio with various wildlife for what McLoughlin referred to as "the SNOW WHITE scene," in which the angel sits amidst a mock forest full of animals, a set stunningly realized by production designer Craig Stearns. Taking a full day to shoot, the animal guest list included fifty birds, two bears, a mother cougar and her two cubs, four deer, one skunk, eight rabbits and one wolf. "It was a nightmare," said McLoughlin. "It was only through the magic of divine intervention (and a capable animal trainer) that we had moments where the animals would respond to Emmanuelle's little talk."

Despite the tumultuous financial condition of DEG, McLoughlin was given free directorial rein over the production. "Dino DeLaurentiis was a wonderful producer to work for in that he let me have creative control," said McLoughlin. The only interference came at the 11th hour when DeLaurentiis demanded that contemporary rock songs be inserted into the film in order to cater to the youth market. "It was a real battle back and forth," recalled the director grudgingly. "Initially I wanted this to have a fully orchestrated score, not synthesized. I felt it really needed to have that classic movie feeling. But Dino was desperate to hit that youth market. I tried to score it as discreetly as I could so that it didn't seem to be a solid rock and roll score. I wanted to have a much more timeless feeling about the movie as opposed to nailing it to an '80s kind of sound."

Also, audience confusion over the final shot at an early test screening forced McLoughlin to cut his original ending in which the hospital bed levitates while Michael Knight and Beart passionately kiss, sending the lovers flying

through the window to reveal a spectacular sunrise (actually a Boss Film matte painting). A 1927 recording of the original song bearing the same title as the film was originally played over the end credits, but that, too, was cut.

Originally scheduled for release in early '88, DEG opted for a late November opening since the studio marketing people felt the film had "a nice Christmas feeling to it." The release proved suicidal for the gentle fantasy which was pitted against highly promoted big guns, like PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES. Although pleased with the final marketing campaign, McLoughlin pleaded with DEG to hold off on the release until early '88.

Making matters worse, the film directly followed the release of two other fantasy-themed films, MADE IN HEAVEN and HELLO AGAIN, neither being hits with audiences or critics. "It was a horrible time to bring it out," said McLoughlin. "When you're doing one of these small kinds of movies where there isn't a known commodity, like a Michael J. Fox, you've got to be very, very careful with the marketing. A lot of people love the picture, but timing is everything when you have a protective little bird. It's somehow suffered the curse of this company."

On the film's negative critical reaction McLoughlin said, "I was heartbroken that so much of what I was hoping people would walk away with was not tapped at all. This movie was from my heart. It was not done for the money. It was not a rip-off of SPLASH, as some critics accused. Those kind of comments hurt the most."

With the film's failure to find its audience the first time around, McLoughlin hopes that DATE WITH AN ANGEL may someday be discovered, via home video or on television, as happened to films like IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE and SOMEWHERE IN TIME, both boxoffice washouts which eventually found their audience. The director looks at the film's prospects optimistically. "Sometimes when you try to make a nostalgic, feel good-type movie, it's taken to be very corny, but when you look back on it years later, it's suddenly really nice."

In retrospect, McLoughlin said, "I didn't look at this as anything other than an escapist piece. I made a real point about calling it 'A Tom McLoughlin Movie' because I like to make a division between 'film' and 'movie.' This is a movie in the old sense. You don't have to buy it for a second, but if you want to come and leave your logic at the door, there's a lot to enjoy." □



## WILLOW

continued from page 13

(THE BLACK CAULDRON).

DRAGONSLAYER (1981) has probably been the most successful cinematic entry in the genre, with its amazing special effects by ILM, the Lucas company that is bringing WILLOW's magic to life. But even this film missed its mark, due to a plodding pace and an undetailed storyline. The necessary richness of plot, motive, action, and theme surfaced only in the film's novelization by Wayland Drew, who has also novelized WILLOW. It's a pity the author's rich background detail is again unlikely to make it to the screen, because the story told by Lucas isn't particularly inventive nor as well-constructed as his STAR WARS opus. □

## ROGER RABBIT

continued from page 5

when Valiant sees his henchmen—a gang of weasels from WIND IN THE WILLOWS—murder a Toontown badger. The effective method of killing cartoon characters is to throw them into a tub of cellulose thinner so they dissolve. Doom's master plan is to drive a truck through Toontown to spray the inhabitants with thinner.

Though WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT? sounds like an inventive idea for a change from Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment assembly line, the production was fraught with difficulties. The Spielberg/Disney link-up would on the surface seem to be an obvious, natural and fruitful partnership. (On reviewing E.T., Variety called it "The best film Walt Disney never made.") But conference room squabbles put their association in jeopardy from the word go and rumor has it they will probably never work together again.

Disney thought Spielberg would automatically use their Burbank animators for the long-optional ROGER RABBIT project. Even though Disney's cartoon feature schedule includes OLIVER AND CO., THE RESCUERS II, with HANSEL AND GRETEL and THE BEAUTY AND THE BEAST waiting for the green light, many of their in-house animators were idle. But the idea of using Disney animation never occurred to Spielberg, who originally thought of using ex-Disney wunderkind Don Bluth, who made AN AMERICAN TAIL for Spielberg. As Bluth was already in preproduction with THE LAND BEFORE TIME BEGAN, Spielberg turned to London-based Richard Williams who subsequently designed all the original characters includ-

ing Roger's car, Benny the Roadster, and Doom's pet vulture, Voltar, based on the birds seen during the closing moments of SNOW WHITE.

For Toronto-born Williams, animator of THE PINK PANTHER, RAGGEDY ANN AND ANDY, WINNIE THE POOH and his pet project THE THIEF AND THE COBBLER, WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT? came along at exactly the right time. The lease on his West End studio had just run out. On Spielberg's insistence, despite rumblings from the Disney front office, Williams storyboarded the entire film in preproduction. These were given to Disney artists for preliminary animation sketching which Williams then refined. "Williams has been effectively absorbed by the Disney organization," said a production source. "Only two of the six animators in his team—he was supposed to have ten—aren't employed by Disney now." Disney reportedly wanted Williams replaced at one stage but Zemeckis stuck by him.

"Williams' contract was for 18 months with all the animation due to end in a year, allowing for three months special effects enhancement by ILM," said a production source. "Within six weeks he was 60 feet behind schedule when the output was supposed to be 80 feet a week of finished animation, to allow ILM enough time to shade and add extra nuance. Zemeckis gave everybody a pep talk at this point although only half the animators remained. Williams was also supposed to have 20 assistants but he only got 12. Phil Nibelink, Disney's number one animator, came on board, as did Russell Ford, whom everyone accepts is 'as good as any Disney animator.' The rest were made up of freelancers. The fear is that the animation will be very patchy for being done so quickly. The budget for

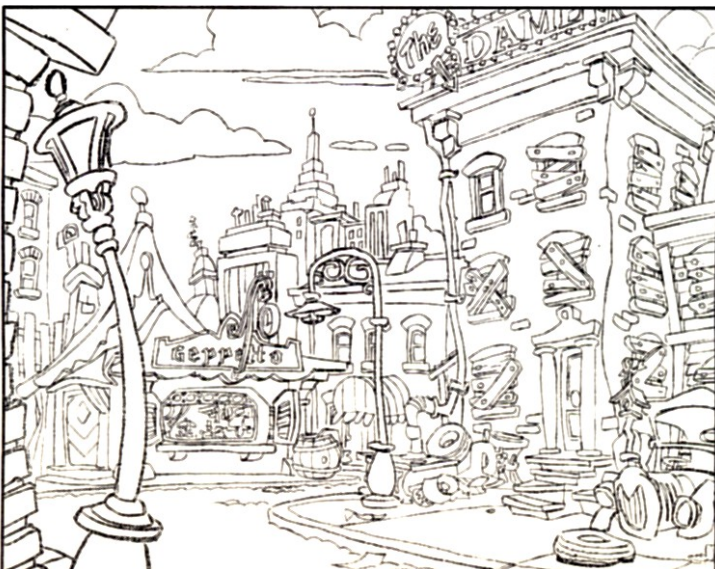
the animation was initially \$6½ million in a 30/70% split with ILM—the 70% in ILM's favor."

Under the code name "Lapin"—French for Rabbit—Roger's look was defined as Tex Avery's Screwly Squirrel facially, sporting a spotted bow tie, goofy red hair and baggy trousers. Although Mel Blanc's son is voicing many of the Warner Bros cartoon characters, Roger himself is being voiced by a (reportedly eccentric) unknown. "The style of the film is very similar to the opening of INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM," said a production source. "It has the same campy feel and the Ink and Paint club is almost an exact replica of that set. Although Hoskins' American accent wavers, he is quite brilliant and has got the art of working in tandem with thin air down to a fine art.

"All the actors did their scenes with either a life-size cardboard cut-out or a stand-in at first," explained the production source. "The run-through was videotaped and the actors watched the sequence six or seven times. Then they did the scene again without any props after memorizing what they were supposed to be reacting to. In a nightclub scene, one of the actors buys a pack of cigarettes from Betty Boop. A cardboard cut-out of Betty Boop was walked up to her mark so the actor knew exactly where to look."

When WHO SHOT ROGER RABBIT? was retitled WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT? a major chunk of the opening Maroon Cartoon hit the cutting room floor. It showed Elmer Fudd mortally wounding Roger with a shotgun. As Roger dies in a pool of cartoon blood, the fake bullets were shown to have been replaced by real ones. Per a source on the production, the opening was softened at the insistence of Disney chairman Jeffrey Katzenberg,

Toontown, the setting of detective Eddie Valiant's investigations in cartoon land, where Gepetto's puppet shop from PINOCCHIO sits next to a Tex Avery skyscraper.



Robert Zemeckis, the director of WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT, also directed BACK TO THE FUTURE for Spielberg.

who sees the film in terms of a merchandising money cow. The film's characters are scheduled to be merchandised by Sears, with Jessica lending her name to a new perfume and lingerie line. "Roger and Baby Herman were redesigned under Spielberg's orders because they weren't cute enough," said the source.

Most of the clever gags contained in the original screenplay of WHO KILLED ROGER RABBIT? have been down-played in the final draft. Production sources lament the excising of scenes in which the cartoon characters whistled animated musical notes which sprouted legs and acted as short-life detective moles for Valiant. "The more literal translation now is that the cartoon characters act mainly as if they were real people, with the same run-of-the-mill problems we all have," said a source. "There is nowhere near the amount of fantasy people are expecting as it is being played mostly straight."

But perhaps the biggest cloud hanging over WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT? is said to be the production's runaway budget, which was rumored by a production source to have topped the \$50 million mark. In simple boxoffice terms that means the film must go on to become one of the biggest money-making pictures of all time, just to break even. A source reputedly close to Spielberg's Amblin operation termed the production "an economic disaster, but a wonderful disaster." □



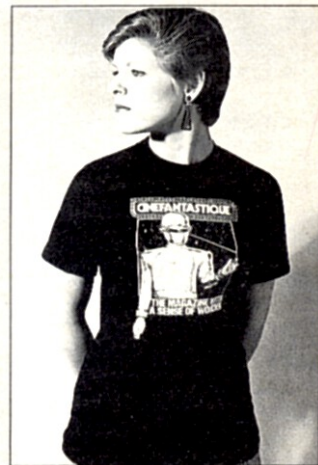
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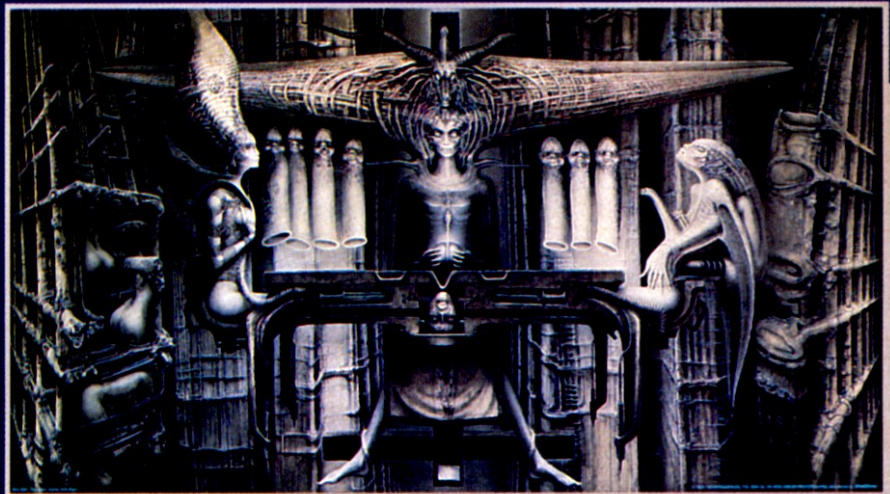


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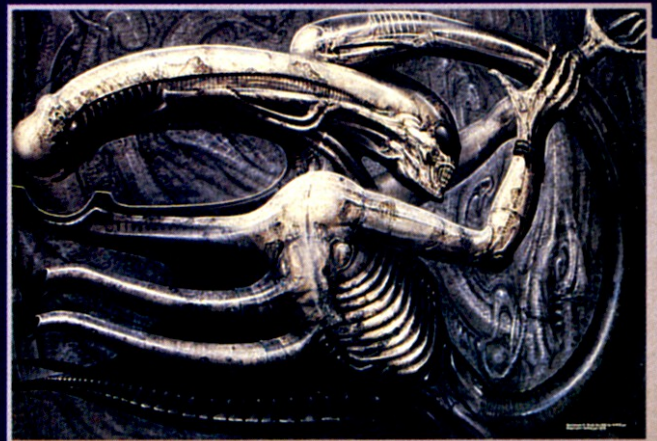


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*NOTE: Some posters may contain mature imagery.*



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